Reconnection

Countering Social Exclusion through Situated Learning

Karen Evans and Beatrix Niemeyer (Eds.)

RECONNECTION

Lifelong Learning Book Series

VOLUME 2

Aims & Scope
"Lifelong Learning" has become a central theme in education and community development. Both international and national agencies, governments and educational institutions have adopted the idea of lifelong learning as their major theme for address and attention over the next ten years. They realize that it is only by getting people committed to the idea of education both life-wide and lifelong that the goals of economic advancement, social emancipation and personal growth will be attained.

The *Lifelong Learning Book Series* aims to keep scholars and professionals informed about and abreast of current developments and to advance research and scholarship in the domain of Lifelong Learning. It further aims to provide learning and teaching materials, serve as a forum for scholarly and professional debate and offer a rich fund of resources for researchers, policy-makers, scholars, professionals and practitioners in the field.

The volumes in this international Series are multi-disciplinary in orientation, polymathic in origin, range and reach, and variegated in range and complexity. They are written by researchers, professionals and practitioners working widely across the international arena in lifelong learning and are orientated towards policy improvement and educational betterment throughout the life cycle.

Reconnection

Countering Social Exclusion through Situated Learning

Edited by

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INTRODUCTION

This book is based on the work of a European partnership, whose members came together from Belgium England Finland Germany Portugal and Greece with the support of funding from the EU Socrates Programme.

Our goal was to work collaboratively to generate new ways of thinking about the situation of people aged between 14 and 25 who are at risk of (or experiencing) social exclusion, set in the context of a unique international analysis of policies, contexts and perspectives on the problems of social exclusion in Europe and the challenges of promoting lifelong learning among those who have rejected it early in life. We set out to examine programmes which help people to RE-ENTER pathways of education and training, but ended with approaches which are better characterised by their ability to RECONNECT people, not only to opportunities in the social structures but also to each other and to their communities We have developed new models and guidelines based on analysis of the best of European practice using the distinctive approaches of 'situated learning'. By an iterative and collaborative method of working, we have arrived at the concept and approaches of Learning Communities Centred on Practice (LCPs), which lie at the heart of this volume.

The outcomes of the partners' three years of work include:

- analyses of the situation of young people growing up in the changing and contrasting socio-economic environments of England, Germany, Belgium, Finland, Portugal and Greece and the policies which are attempting to address problems of exclusion
- a set of criteria according to which young people are considered, in each of the countries, to be inadequately prepared for further education and training (VET), lifelong learning and the labour market
- a critical review of a collection of examples representing good practice in application and development of the concepts of 'situated learning in improving the situation of young adults and their prospects as lifelong learners
- a new and enriched set of concepts and ideas concerning *Learning Communities Centred on Practice* which can be used by developers of learning programmes
- recommendations for policy and decision-makers in order to support them in improving the effectiveness of the measures being used and being developed for the future.

The book is built around these outcomes, which we have discussed with international audiences in and through the European Conference on Educational Research as well as through specifically organised national and international seminars.

In the course of this research, we learnt much about the possibilities and limits of the ideas and practices of situated learning, action centred learning and communities of practice in the context of the disadvantaged learner. We believe our new concept of Learning Communities Centred on Practice enables us to capture the important features of both the individual *and the* societal part of integration processes. It aims to integrate social and vocational learning through an holistic view on the learners personality and allows the necessary social space, where participation can be lived and experienced as competence.

We have many good memories of our experience of working together as an international partnership.. We met on at least five occasions in international workshops, combining these with visits to innovative forms of provision. We offer our grateful thanks to the many trainers organisers and young people in the 6 countries who welcomed us and acted as key informants for our work. Without the freely allowed access to their field of experience many of our ideas could not have been developed, without their critical discussions these ideas would not have been tested for their practical relevance.

Different European VET systems shape different approaches to reconnection, while individual experience of integration problems seems to be commonly shared. In our debates we very often have been stressing the differences between our systems, approaches, culture and history, while on the individual level similarities seemed to dominate.

Our hope for the book is that it will stimulate new ideas, in ways which interlink theory and practice. We wanted to contribute to the mutual development of expertise of all professionals concerned, by enhancing the sharing of competences. This volume aims to contribute to the establishment of a set of methodologies and the development of related theories. It should enrich the ways of thinking about reconnection of researchers and practitioners, of politicians, planners and all professionals holding the responsibility for integration strategies. These are the people we hope will read it, use it, critique it and find it helpful in advancing their own ideas.

Karen Evans and Beatrix Niemeyer
March 2004

EDITORIAL BY SERIES EDITORS

This volume is the second volume in the new Kluwer series entitled *Lifelong Learning Book Series*. This new series flows on from the symposium **International Handbook of Lifelong Learning**, which we jointly edited with Yukiko Sawano and Michael Hatton, and which was published by Kluwer Academic Publishers in 2001. With the *Lifelong Learning Book Series* we aim to keep scholars and professionals informed about and abreast of current developments and to advance research and scholarship in the field. Our further aims are to provide learning and teaching materials, serve as a forum for scholarly and professional debate and offer a rich fund of resources for researchers, policy-makers, scholars, professionals and practitioners in the field.

The first volume in the series, Richard Bagnall's book *Cautionary Tales in the Ethics of Lifelong Learning Policy and Management*, provides a critique of contemporary trends in lifelong learning policy and management. It focuses attention on 21 trends, each represented by a fable that is drawn from the experience of a stake-holder.

This second volume in the series, an edited collection by Karen Evans and Beatrix Niemeyer, arises from the work of a European partnership and includes the work of authors from Belgium, England, Finland, Germany, Portugal and Greece. The aim of the text is to identify new ways of thinking about the situation of people aged between fourteen and twenty-five, who are at risk of or are currently experiencing social exclusion as a result of limited access to lifelong learning opportunities.

The authors analyze those factors that prevent young people in Europe from entering systems of post-compulsory education and training, and that militate against their continuing in lifelong learning. The authors identify a number of programs, activities and experiences that assist people to embark upon or re-enter a range of pathways in lifelong learning. These in turn will enhance their ability to make new or further connections, not only to other opportunities in society but also with each other and with their communities. Arising out of their co-operative endeavours the authors arrive at the concept of learning communities centered on practice. This is a new notion designed to integrate social and vocational learning by means of applying a holistic view of learners and their social space, in which participation in learning can be lived and experienced, and requisite and appropriate capacities and competences be developed.

We should like to highlight what we regard as the principal achievements of this book. It provides for its readers:

- analyses of the situation of young people growing up in the changing and contrasting socio-economic environments of western European countries;
- an illumination and exposure of some strengths and weaknesses of policies intended to address problems of exclusion;
- a new and enriched set of concepts and ideas concerning *Learning Communities Centred on Practice* (LCPs) developed with the intention of

capturing the important features of both the individual and the societal parts of the 're-inclusion' process;

- a critical analysis of the feasibility of social inclusion processes in which the unfavorable overall socio-economic conditions (including the weaknesses of existing VET structures and reduced employment opportunities) are considered;
- a discussion of the effect of the increasing move towards globalisation, flexibility, individualisation and the dilution of the concept of work itself;
- recommendations concerning 'framework conditions' as well as 'good practices'. These aim to support opinion formers and policy-makers in improving the effectiveness of the measures being used and being developed for the future.

We are very pleased to present the publication of this second volume in the Kluwer *Lifelong Learning Book Series*. We are sure that this volume will provide the wide range of constituencies working in the domain of lifelong learning with a rich range of new materials for their consideration and further investigation. We believe that it will encourage their continuing critical thinking, research and development, academic and scholarly production and individual, institutional and professional progress.

18 May 2004   David Aspin and Judith Chapman
                                                   Editors of the series

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KAREN EVANS AND BEATRIX NIEMEYER

RE-ENTER AND RECONNECT - BUT WHOSE PROBLEM IS IT?

1. INTRODUCTION

What prevents young people in Europe from entering systems of vocational education and training? What prevents them from going on in VET? What makes them drop out? These were starting questions for our European partnership. In some respects they are not new questions - entry to and drop out from post-school systems of education and training have been policy and practice preoccupations since the 1980s. The questions have a new intensity in the first decade of the 2000s. They are linked with identification of 'social exclusion' as a real and present danger, and recognition of the importance of skills as 'protection' against it:

> 'people without skills are five times more likely to become unemployed than those with higher educational level qualifications; in the end employment goes to the employable'

> (Commission on Social Justice, 1993, p. 175)

OECD documents emphasise the risks (and threats) of being among the 'knowledge poor':

> 'For those who have successful experience of education, and who see themselves as capable learners, continuing learning is an enriching experience, which increases their sense of control over their own lives and their society. For those who are excluded from this process or choose not to participate, the generalisation of lifelong learning may only have the effect of increasing their isolation from the world of the knowledge rich.'

> (OECD 1997, p.101)

In all European countries there is a growing number of young persons at the school leaving age and older, who are at risk of losing contact with the educational system, which is supposed gradually to lead them from school to a long term paid occupation through planned measures of vocational education and training. They consequently face reduced chances in the labour market and are at higher risk of dropping out of the social 'mainstream' in their respective societies. Individual risks and personal disadvantages are manifested in difficulties in finding a job or apprenticeship placement on the 'normal' way, but it is impossible to draw up a list of fixed and lasting individual criteria. Personal characteristics, gender, intellectual abilities, interests, school career together with social and environmental factors, financial, social and cultural resources and the economic structure of the area in which a person lives in are all factors influencing the process of transition from school to the adult world of gainful employment.

1

The questions about 'barriers to participation in VET' therefore need to be set in the context of a much wider analysis of the position of young adults in changing social landscapes.

2. YOUNG ADULTS –THE CHANGING SOCIAL LANDSCAPE

In all European countries, young adults are experiencing uncertain status and are dependent upon state and parental support for longer periods than would have been the case a generation ago. Faced with changing opportunity structures, people have to find their own ways of reconciling personal aspirations with available opportunities and their own values in the domains of education, consumption, politics, work and family life. Achievement and recognition of adult status comes at different times to different spheres of life.

Social changes in the inter-related domains of work, education, family and community all affect transition behaviours, which themselves reflect personal identities and aspirations as well as the opportunity structures with which young adults are faced. The social dynamics against which policies and programmes are assessed have to include growing individualisation of the life course. (Evans et al, 2000, Dwyer and Wyn, 2002)

In the work arena, transitions to worker status are defined by institutionalised rules concerning recognised qualifications and credentials. Successful negotiation of these is heavily influenced by cultural and social 'capital', the resources which come from family background and social networks and are important in access to information, advice, social, financial and career support. Young adults bring different transition behaviours to life situations, and success in negotiating these structures and networks can bring stability or instability to the life course. For those who are unsuccessful in gaining entry to jobs, long term unemployment cuts young adults off from the opportunities of the market, from access to work-based qualification systems and from the exercise of citizenship in any significant sense (Evans and Heinz, 1994). Even successful entry to the labour market can bring another set of limitations and instabilities. Early work entry can create premature foreclosure of options and stereotyped work identities. In England in the 1950s workplaces were described in the Crowther Report (Ministry of Education, 1959) as deadening to the minds of young school leavers. Lifelong learning policies of the late 1990s now talk of learning organisations. These are claimed to provide the model for the future, providing new opportunities for democratic access to knowledge. But only a small minority of enterprises match up to the model, while for those in the increasing ranks of casualised labour, training in narrowly-based competences is unlikely to be of any use over time. Members of casualised pools of labour kept in on-going insecurity and instability are also unlikely to be able to engage in full participation in society.

How did the changing employment situations of the late 20th century affect young people's attitudes to work? For some time, there was a version of the 'moral panic' over the effects of unemployment of young people's motivations to work. Although Britain was at that time the 'unemployment centre' of Europe, these fears extended widely across Europe as youth unemployment increased everywhere with

fears that a generation would be raised lacking the 'work-ethic'. In fact, the decline of employment opportunities for young people 'tightened the bonds' between education and employment in a host of ways. The expansion of post-compulsory education has produced new sets of structures and experiences between the end of the compulsory phase of schooling and first entry to the labour market, at ages up to the mid-twenties.

Families can impede or support the transitions of early adulthood. For many young adults the experience of physical separation from the family for extended periods may result in improved understanding and appreciation and is part of the process of negotiating independence, as Evans et al (2001) have shown. For others, escape from the parental home is seen as the only way to achieve a sense of self and to exercise choices, however restricted these may in reality be. For some young adults thrown back into involuntary dependence on family through welfare policies, prospects for achievement of independence and citizenship may be impaired. It can be argued further that it should be a basic social right not to 'have to rely' on their family because alternatives do not exist (Finch, 1996).

In the context of social changes and individualised transitions, the parental role becomes even more one of support rather than guidance. Few parents have experience of the options facing their children because of the pace of change in all aspects of work and education. Policies in many parts of Europe have progressively increased financial dependence of young people on their parents as access to unemployment benefit have been removed and training rates have assumed parental support. The inter-connections between the three main transitions (or 'careers') of the youth phase become significant here, as Coles (1996) has argued:

- education, training and labour market careers (from schooling into post-school education and training and jobs
- domestic careers (from families of origin to families of destination)
- housing careers (from living dependent on families to living independently of them).

Increasingly these transitions are non-linear. They involve a range of temporary and transitional statuses, and experiences in one domain can fundamentally change or disrupt passages in the others. Many factors can combine to marginalise and exclude young people. While those without skills are most at risk, their 'social capital' is also a very significant factor. Those without skills but high social capital are helped and supported through transitions in ways which are not available to those lacking such capital. Previous research (Evans and Heinz 1994; Evans et al 2000) has also shown that the 'active behaviours' promoted for young people can be important in finding new possibilities for young people who are most vulnerable, while those in the most advantaged trajectories are often carried into jobs in the primary segments of the labour market almost without regard to their specific behaviours.

3. SOCIAL EXCLUSION AND LIFELONG LEARNING - THE NEW POLICY DISCOURSE

Participation in the labour force is rightly regarded as being of crucial significance in tackling social exclusion - it provides people with the income they need to participate more generally in society and gives purpose and direction to many. But dead-end jobs and casualised labour are hidden mechanisms of exclusion over time. Real skills and their labour market currency give access to life chances. Training in 'proper skills' provides real social and economic returns, as evidenced by the skills and labour force surveys now conducted regularly in most states.

Social exclusion has entered the policy agendas of governments worldwide. The need to 'combat exclusion' is not framed as a debate about inequalities – it is about countering the processes and mechanisms which act to detach groups of people from the social mainstream. Social exclusion tends to be self–reproducing. Social polarisation increases faster if groups at the most advantaged end of society are allowed to self-detach from social obligations to increase their own advantages further. Involuntary exclusion at the 'bottom end of society' becomes harder to escape from as gaps widen between the 'haves' and the 'have nots'.

Policies which aim to help people to raise their level of basic skills, develop new skills and renew their levels of confidence after periods out of the labour market or 'social mainstream' are based evidence of the protective and 'risk-reducing effects' of skills, but it is a one-sided social analysis which looks only at the assumed deficits of individuals. This analysis asks 'what skills do people need to re-enter the standard routes into and through the labour market?' A more balanced analysis of social dynamics would ask- whose problem is it to tackle the mechanisms which are 'detaching people from the social mainstream'? Increasing individual skills tends to 'change the order of the queues at the factory gates' but it does not materially affect the overall balance of inclusion and exclusion. Individual problems require individual solutions, structural problems require structural solutions. Raising skills levels is important but this alone will not tackle the mechanisms which are locking people out and detaching them.

'Lifelong learning' solutions are proposed in many countries. These recognise that formal educational systems are themselves part of the detaching mechanisms, and aim to provide alternative educational routes or 'second chances'. These are the institutionalised versions of lifelong learning, sometimes seen as the 'sticking plaster' responses to more deep-seated structural problems. A second version of lifelong learning which has been gaining ground (see Alheit, 2002) is that of learning as a biographical process, which involves negotiation of institutional settings for formalised learning but also recognises the power of experiential everyday learning which forms a 'biographical stock of knowledge' and dispositions towards the world.

What do these versions mean for the design of interventions for young people who have become disengaged from the standard pathways into labour markets and are at risk of longer term detachment from the social mainstream?

4. 'RE-ENTER PROGRAMMES'

Some interventions do not look to 'lifelong learning' as policy solutions. These are interventions based on standard human capital approaches, which see strengthening of standard forms of front-ended education and training as providing the best returns on investment (Type I below) or bringing 'drop-outs' back in (Type II). Interventions which draw on lifelong learning ideas (explicitly or tacitly) are Types III and IV.

Type I: expanded standard routes
These aim to improve foundations and remediate deficits in earlier schooling in order to hold young people in the mainstream system and enable them to 're-enter' the standard institutional tracks for initial vocational education and training. The emphasis is on 'retention'.
Type II: re-entry for those 'dropping out'
These are programmes specifically designed for drop-outs from the regular systems in order to bring them back in.
Type III: alternative institutional pathways
Those with an institutional emphasis which attempt to broaden and bring into the 'mainstream' alternative routes and pathways to achievement of qualifications – supporting re-entry by providing multiple doors and pathways to skills and qualifications for further training and work.
Type IV: holistic 'lifeworld' interventions
Those with a biographical emphasis, which aim to work with young people's 'lifeworlds', promoting informal learning as well as skills development – re-entry involves broader processes of reconnection into the social life through multiple agencies and social support

Examples of these approaches can be found in different shapes and forms in the countries studied, Belgium Finland, Germany, England, Portugal and Greece, although their prominence varies considerably. Type I approaches aim for extension of the period of initial compulsory education and increased 'retention' in the standard routes. All of the Northern countries have used Type I approaches, although Belgium appears to have been more successful in securing an effective extension of the period of compulsory schooling than the other countries. Type II approaches apply where there are highly structured transition systems with qualification hurdles which explicitly determine labour market entry or exclusion from it. (e.g. Germany) Fitting more people into the existing front loaded systems has been complemented in most countries by Type III alternative routes. This then presents the challenges of

expanding the mainstream to incorporate the new routes, to counter the negative effects of 'second class' labelling and ensure their recognition. The English approaches to 'foundation modern apprenticeships' has been an attempt to rebrand youth training programmes and establish them as part of a progression routes into the higher level 'advanced modern apprenticeships' and part of wider plans to expand educational participation in the 14-19 age band.

Type IV approaches are found principally in the voluntary and community organisations, third sector non-profit organisations which play important roles in supporting disadvantaged young people in many countries. These organisations may be the lead provider of Type III programmes, or may work in partnership with other providers in any or all of the types of provision.

We have used the term 'Re-Enter programmes' as an abbreviation. It covers the broad family of interventions which aim to help young people to 're-enter' learning and broader forms of skills development, in order that they can 'reconnect' with the social mainstream of further training and work. These programmes aim to promote the trainability and the employability of the young and to support their social integration, to re-motivate them for training and education, to qualify them for the labour market and to enable them to participate as citizens. In general these programmes are designed as bridges between education and labour market entry.

5. TARGET GROUPS-WHOSE PROBLEM? THE SUBJECTIVE PERSPECTIVE

The target group of Re-Enter programmes differs from country to country. The problems of teenage mothers, street children and immigrant workers finding a place in vocational education and training in a risky European labour market are evident, but there are many more young people who are tired of school and averse to learning or training. Many young people who have lost the track of mainstream vocational education and training lack the motivation for learning, and look back on demotivating learning experiences at school. Working class males face the most obstacles, because they are oriented towards early entry to paid work, females are more prepared to stay in further education. This is supported by the more or less dominant cultural expectations of the male breadwinner and the perception of adult status as linked to paid work. The attitude of young people in Europe towards VET depends on the attractiveness and availability of unskilled jobs as well as availability of skilled work in their region, but their motivation for learning and training is a crucial point everywhere.

Ethnic origin also is an important factor influencing social integration through educational pathway. Inner European migration, of 'foreign workers' in the 60s and 70s from the south of Europe to the north and now back after their retirement or recent migration movements from the eastern European countries or Africa to Europe produce special problems for young people. These have created particular forms of youth unemployment in all countries from Portugal to Belgium - with only Finland being less affected. Furthermore it is important to recognise that young persons who are going through these transitions are, at the same time, living through a biographical stage of change and orientation in relation to the opportunities and

expectations of the adult world. They tend not to have working experience but only learning experiences and have the strong aim to become a legitimate participant of adult relationships, which still are best acknowledged in the working world. Finally the geographical area young persons live in shapes their access to the labour market: where there is a strong need for unskilled work the importance of VET is reduced – young people can enter the labour market without special training. Those countries which have formalised VET systems hold up the importance of certificates for entering VET; those with rather informal training systems seem to be more flexible and open for less qualified young persons.

Transitions from school to vocational education and training can thus be problematic steps for young persons, which they have to face at a difficult age. Many of them do not feel sufficiently equipped for the decisions they have to make about their future career and personal perspectives. If upper secondary education is not their first choice, the lack of good quality training places often makes it hard to enter the labour market. Lack of appropriate training and education limits the possibilities to engage and participate in social life.

6. ALTERNANCE, SOCIAL PEDAGOGY AND THE POTENTIAL OF SITUATED LEARNING

If school to VET transition is a troubled process of learning for many, the major question is not: how does learning happen, and how can it be made more effective? but: *where and how can learning start, how can young persons be motivated to learn?* Motivation is to be seen as the very beginning of the learning process and indeed is one of the most crucial points in Re-Enter practice.

The question of what constitutes appropriate education and training under these circumstances was considered trans-nationally in the 1970s and 1980s. Reubens' study of Bridges to Work (1977) and the CEDEDFOP (1980) review carried out in the European Community countries of the time advocated solutions based on the 'alternance principle'. This involved alternating periods of training, education and work experience that were deemed to bridge young people into the regular VET and labour market positions from which they had been displaced by the social and economic conditions that had created large scale youth unemployment. Ways of combining the educational, training and work experiences lie at the heart of theories of vocational education and training, and 'vocational pedagogics' that developed strongly at that time. Displacement and disappointed expectations created motivational problems that simple application of the 'alternance' principle could not tackle. Another branch of theory and practice focused on the underlying causes of disengagement, offering solutions based on social theory and the methods of 'social pedagogy' and youth work (see, for example, Lee (1982) for social education strategies). While these approaches were able to demonstrate theoretical coherence and practical successes in engaging young people at least in the short term (see Chisnall, 1984, for example) vocational achievement and recognition in the labour market were lacking.

Socio-anthropological perspectives came into the frame in the 1990s with Lave and Wenger's (1991) influential studies of workplace interactions and the ways in which workers' skills were constructed, recognised and ascribed value in workplace environments and communities of practice. This social process of learning can be considered as a gradual process of growing participation in communities of practice, which originally was seen as a group of experts collaborating to accomplish a common aim (Lave and Wenger, 1991). According to this concept learning is a simultaneous process of belonging (to a community of practice), of becoming (developing an identity as member of this community), of experiencing (the meaning of the common work task) and doing (as practical action contributing to the common work task) (Wenger, 1999, 5). While this social theory of learning was developed with regard to workplace learning building on ethnographic research it has valuable insights also for the programmes aiming to counter social and vocational disengagement, although the empirical basis on which it has been based differs considerably from the structural context shaping Re-Enter programs.

These perspectives on situated learning have offered new ways of thinking about workplace learning, but the concepts have become overstretched as they have been seized on by researchers trying to explain and theorising phenomena that meet few of the underlying assumptions of the original theory. (See also Hodkinson and Hodkinson, 2004, Fuller and Unwin, 2003).

7. FROM 'COMMUNITIES OF PRACTICE' TO 'LEARNING COMMUNITIES CENTRED ON PRACTICE' (LCPS)

For the Re-Enter problem, while theories of situated learning appeared promising in offering the potential for a more holistic formulation that could go beyond the twin track approaches of vocational and social pedagogy, we have worked towards an expanded set of constructs that differ from Lave and Wenger's concepts in some significant respects, to address the particular characteristics of learning programmes designed to support the often troubled or interrupted processes of young people's transition between learning and working environments. Our constructs highlight the following features, while recognising the socially situated nature of the learning:

- the individual biography of each young person is highly significant for their engagement in the learning environments and 'communities' in question
- the programmes' explicit goals are to foster learning, in order that people can move through the programme and move on. The communities are therefore communities of learners and the primary goals are learning and moving on.
- The concepts of 'novice' and 'expert' do not have the same salience as in communities of practice: newcomers bring capabilities with them, they participate, move through and eventually move on with strengthened capabilities, which they share on the way. Expert status in this context comes with the responsibilities for creating and maintaining the environment for full participation.

Our expanded concept of situated learning encompasses these features. Engagement in the intended learning is often the single biggest challenge, since without engagement there is no motivation and no learning. Our expanded concept thus sees learning as situated in three ways:

1) in practical activity
2) in the culture and context of the workplace/learning environment
3) in the socio-biographical features of the learners' life

Situated learning, in our formulation, builds on a set of methods situating learning in a meaningful context and describing a process aimed at full participation of the learner. Learning is seen as a product of the activity and the context in which it takes place. It is a social process and involves participation in **learning communities centred on social practice**. For the purposes of this study, these 'LCPs' are built upon expanded ideas of situated learning which are appropriate to the Re-Enter populations and extend significantly beyond the formulations of Lave and Wenger (1991). The term LCP is used in this expanded sense throughout this volume.

Our concept of learning communities centred on practice thus builds on the importance of situated learning with the core idea that learning is an interactive social process rather than the result of classroom instructions. These ideas helped us to reconceptualise Re-Enter pedagogies. It was a common (international) experience that work related forms of learning, which go beyond mere technical qualification considerably help to increase the motivation of young people for education and training. To participate in a work process promotes to take on responsibility and to develop commitment. Practical work in a team helps to make learning success visible and to experience the own contribution to it as personal success. To work in an authentic context highlights the importance of the own work. The transnational research on which this volume is based has shown that there is a European wide shift towards subject oriented learning methods, which relates strongly to experiences with social and informal learning and aims to provide a closer link to the workplace reality. The theoretical approaches reflect the differing social and cultural backgrounds and are rooted in the specific national discourses rather than referring to the unique idea of situated learning.

The four dimensions of learning as doing, experiencing, belonging and becoming are crucial to reconnect young people at the risk of becoming disengaged. Authentic training places, which have a close link to the local labour market and offer customer contact help to give evidence to the significance and importance of the individual's work, provided they have been chosen properly according to the interests, abilities and needs of the young persons. All this is considered to be of special importance for those young persons who have experienced learning difficulties at school. Authentic settings have shown to be most effective to rebuild the wish to learn. However, the specific context of reconnection requires a review of the idea of communities of practice. The social theory of situated learning presupposes the community being ready and willing to open for newcomers / learners on the one side and their sharing of the meaning of the common activity and the underlying values on the other. Thus it appears to be highly idealistic and

optimistic. While this idea highlights the social dimension in the process of learning it does not sufficiently reflect

- questions of power and hierarchies
- questions of selection and exclusion
- structures of educational systems
- questions of individual abilities and limits to learning.

The concept of LCPs builds on the outstanding importance of the community for processes of situated learning, but transfers it to the specific conditions of the Re-Enter context. To reconnect disengaged young people it is crucial that they share the meaning of a common activity in which they are supposed to engage. Furthermore they need the opportunity to experience work in a very practical sense. The learning community centred on practice plays an important role, because it helps to rebuild an identity in the working context. It also provides support with problems in learning and as a way of social control. In addition to this the idea of a learning community focuses on learners abilities (not on their deficits) and highlights the common effort of co-learners and adults who are interactively framing and shaping this developing process.

It is able to address the specific target groups, with their individual histories, abilities and career orientations which might not be met by the mainstream vocational education and training at offer. LCPs thus provide a more holistic way of learning integrating the development of technical, practical, basic and personal skills. They aim at a balance between the challenges of authentic work contexts and the time and space necessary for reflection.

8. SITUATED LEARNING AND COMPETENCE DEVELOPMENT

Theories of learning have been developed predominantly with the perspective on established learning settings. Still in many cases these are exactly the settings of learning in which young people have previously experienced failure, which means that they are not the best places for positive engagement or forging new senses of themselves or their abilities. The concept of situated learning questions the school as unique location of learning processes and stresses the importance of other learning surroundings. It values informal ways of learning and stresses the potential of unintentional learning settings.

It is based on the importance of work experience and practical action for the enhancement of processes of learning and understanding, which are common to theories of vocational education and training, but shifts the focus from the individual to the social components of learning. The concepts of situated learning allow for an extended view on competences and competence development. Situated learning is not about specialised training of single skills, but about experience and competence in participation. This includes the process of acquiring the cultural attributes of participation: values and beliefs, common stories and collective problem solving strategies of the LCP. It thereby offers an enhanced view of competences, integrating social, personal and vocational.

The educational biographies of 'disadvantaged' young people are usually shaped by social difficulties and barriers of various kinds. In vocational training preparation programmes therefore, an important socialising task exists quite apart from the task of a purely vocational qualification. Here not only vocational skills are imparted, the promotion of social competence and personality building activities are of just as great importance. While 'normal' vocational education and training particularly aims at the achievement of occupation-specific and technical qualifications, Re-Enter programmes must go above and beyond technical qualifications, to offer as broad a vocational orientation as possible, and particularly in the sense of a holistic education, enable young people successfully to take up, continue with and complete a vocational training. As important as vocational skills development is the chance to grow in an LCP, a learning community centred on practice, and to support the young persons on their way to full participation. In theory as in practice learning and socialisation are difficult to separate. We argue that learning is not only an individual act but that learning processes are emergent from the social contexts in which they are situated. Learning therefore is not only a question of knowledge transfer but rather a question of allowing young persons to participate in social situations where they are accepted as members with a potential of growing competence.

The balance between vocational instruction by VET professionals and social construction of competences by young persons varies widely in the participating countries, influencing the designs of programmes in practice and the role and importance given to the educational staff. To consider learning as social interaction in an LCP, thus valuing the social components in learning, questions the conventional relationship between teachers and pupils. Learning is no longer understood as a one-way-process but as a common activity instead. This is a special challenge for school based programmes, because the teachers' role will be revised considerably. Teachers and trainers need to fulfil new roles such as tutors, counsellors and mediators, etc. Thus it will be important to develop suitable training conditions to enable them to meet these new professional challenges. This point has especially been taken up in the Portuguese contribution (chapter five), where the implementation of a programme for teachers and trainers training is described.

As argued earlier learning processes are themselves situated in three ways:

practically
- including work practice in a meaningful context/meaningful work
- the learning community on practice
- the individual access to programmes
- the time and space provided for learning
- power relations and hierarchical structures within the learning community

socially
- including the LCP holding a shared responsibility for learning and personal development
- the adjustment of the learning context to learners' world and experiences
- the links between programmes or chains of support
- the integration of social and vocational education

- the working conditions in general
culturally
- including a shared responsibility for the engagement of young people by all institutions, agencies and companies concerned
- the established VET structures
- the history and culture of VET

The concept of situated learning itself is socially situated. If applied uncritically it can help to serve strategies of new qualification policies exclusively dominated by workplace and employers demands, neglecting any responsibility of the established agents of education. It is self evident that the problem of social inclusion will be sharpened then solved by such arguments and strategies.

It has been argued, that situated learning involving 'legitimate peripheral participation (Lave and Wenger, 1991) does not allow for the individual to grow beyond the borders of the respective community of practice or take a critical position towards it. Experience with the apprenticeship model in vocational education also adds to this critique. To have novice and expert regularly working together in an authentic context does not automatically produce a learning process. Apprentices are not always accepted as legitimate members of the community of practice, their position as a learner can also be limited in practice. Apart from all the positive experiences recorded in evaluation studies (see Fuller and Unwin, 2002, for example) this environment does not guarantee learning. The right to full access to a conventional community of craft practice can be reduced by hierarchy and the balance of power within the group. Moreover, a great part of the target group of 'Re-Enter Programmes' has continuing needs for learning support. It can be argued that trust, engagement and awareness build the foundation for the development of competences in an LCP, as explained further in Chapter 2. In the context of Re-Enter and LCPs based on our expanded concept of situated learning, the aim is to move on and through the community, rather than from 'novice' to 'expert' status within it. Increasing engagement, gains in social confidence and a growing range of skills mark this process. Full participation would then also mean sharing in responsibility for the collective growth of the community and a limited learning capacity should not restrict the level of participation.

Our expanded concepts of situated learning have to include the question about the critical dimension of participation and the direction of a learning process. Participation thus includes the right to criticise and the ability to learn how to criticise constructively, and thereby influence and shape the values and strategies of an LCP.

When analysing situated learning in Re-Enter programmes selection mechanisms also have to be examined in two respects:

1. How are programmes selected, and respectively, how are participants selected?. The Belgian contribution gives evidence of the importance of outreach and access of programmes. Career guidance and orientation are of special importance taking into account that the phase of school to VET transition meets young people at the critical age of orientation in general. Situated learning sees young persons as active subjects in the process of programme selection, who should be

given the necessary overview and the possibility to taste multiple occupational practice. The actors in the field of career guidance can be considered again as a community of practice, working together towards the aim of offering best chances to the young. In practice this might include adjusting expectations to realities.

2. During a programme explicit and implicit mechanisms continue to determine learners' success. Certificates of success can be an important motivating factor for learners. Yet examinations, particularly in strongly structured VET systems, have a strong selective function and hamper weaker learners' progress. Pedagogical approaches that aim to build on strengths by nurturing biographical competences venture off the beaten path, and often suffer from insufficient recognition. How is progress valued, acknowledged, assessed and certified?

Re-Enter programmes offer different learning contexts. They face the difficulty of establishing a balance between an authentic and meaningful work context and providing the time and space necessary for learning and reflecting.
Re-Enter programmes also face the challenge of enabling the participation and social engagement of those with a history of low achievement relative to socially expected norms, and difficulties or resistance in learning.

9. THE POTENTIAL OF SITUATED FORMS OF LEARNING FOR IMPROVEMENT OF THE SITUATION OF PEOPLE THREATENED WITH SOCIAL EXCLUSION - LIMITS AND POSSIBILITIES.

Situated forms of learning cannot on their own improve the material conditions of people. If the material and social conditions of young people stretch them beyond their capacities to cope unaided, then high levels of risk continue. Interventions must therefore go hand in hand with measures designed to alter aspects of the material and social environment which keep young people at risk. These may include access to suitable low cost accommodation, various kinds of training allowances and social support made available in supportive and easily accessible ways.

What Re-Enter programmes which involve situated learning can do, under the right social and material conditions, is to help with developing more positive learner identities. As Stephen Ball and colleagues (2000) have found, many leave initial education with identities as 'non-learners', their appetite for learning at an end. As the OECD report cited earlier asserted successful learning experiences help people to see themselves as capable learners. Many of the 'choices' young people make are rooted in partly formed social identities, the senses young people have of who they are and what their capabilities are. Self definition involves internalising the definitions and attributes ascribed by others. These subjective identities are associated with social class, gender and ethnicity. They also reflect educational credentials and other mediating factors associated with experiences in the labour market and the wider social context, with narrower or wider career options playing a part in shaping identities over time. While new options and pathways are increasing in relative significance as traditional transition patterns become 'fractured' and extended, disadvantage continues to be concentrated in groups defined by class,

gender and ethnicity in particular localities (see Banks et al, 1992, Ball et al, 2000, Rützel, 1995, Lippegaus et al, 1998).

To impact positively on young people's senses of who they are and what their capabilities could be, interventions through education and social support must begin with respect for individual autonomy as well as consideration of the social aspects of the learning environment or milieu. Young people's subjective emotional experiences of support and satisfaction, their future perspectives of optimism or pessimism and their feelings of control in relation to norms and external expectations are all significant variables (Evans, 2002). The 'educator' may exercise *influence* through providing information, discussion of courses of action and their possible consequences, and creating conditions for exposure to, and engagement with, different points of view. Through all of these, the educator can create conditions for attitude change, personality development and unfolding of competences. The potential for personal and social competences to 'unfold' is also affected by the learning milieu and particular societal conditions. The interactions which are necessary to develop capacities through learning are enhanced or impeded by the social environment and the removal or reduction of external barriers are as important as the facilitation of personal growth. Thus, person-centred approaches must be combined with altering the material and social environment so that demands do not become so great that young people cannot cope unaided. When demands exceed capacity to cope, the risk of social exclusion is heightened. While much emphasis is placed on the obligations and responsibilities of the young, the social rights which are linked to the material and cultural conditions for social inclusion and participation must be kept in sight. These are crucial conditions for positive versions of the 'social self' to develop.

Each individual needs to be able to balance and manage 'internal and external' realities, that is their felt needs in relation to the environment in which they operate. Where there is a mismatch between felt needs and the opportunities the environment can provide, dissatisfaction results. Expectations may be 'unrealistic' because they stem from self concept and identity formation which is at odds with the environment or they may be unrealistic because the environment is overly constrained or hostile and the expectations could be better met through changes to the environment. Individuals may accommodate or resist aspects of the social world, the social and structural influences around them. They may do so individually or collectively. They need to be able to regulate their behaviour and expectations in relation to others and the environment, while maintaining and developing a values base, which gives meaning to goals and actions. They need to become 'productive processors of reality' in Hurrelmann (1988) terms, goal directed in their behaviour, with the capacities to regulate and adjust their actions, achieve and redefine goals and boundaries and to participate in change.

10. WORK-BASED LEARNING - LIMITS AND POSSIBILITIES

We have shown that experiences of work activities and environments are significant elements in many of the approaches aiming to counter social exclusion. Work

experience in real or simulated employment settings is held to have a valuable part to play in the preparation of young people for adult and working life. But state-managed schemes of work-substitute activity designed to bridge the gap for those who find it difficult to follow the 'normal paths' can actually reinforce disadvantage further by labelling and stigmatising effects. Programmes which are 'mainstreamed' in some way, for example being well integrated into community projects or genuine workplaces (with structured training provided) can help to secure re-entry, reintegration and progression into further VET as a relatively seamless process (although Field (2000) warns about the dangers of a 'creaming off' effect which leaves the most disadvantaged with their problems compounded as scheme after scheme is undertaken with no positive work or training outcome.) The downside of work-based programmes in real enterprises and businesses is that work pressures, while offering realistic experience, are less tolerant of trial and error learning, reflection and support. Such elements can however be provided by off-job mentors and complementary learning environments.

There is a cultural and institutional legacy of mainstreamed work-based training in countries such as Britain and Germany. In countries such as Portugal there is a mainstreamed non-formal sector which can potentially provide such opportunities. These forms of situated learning potentially play a part in countering the social and economic exclusion of a growing minority of young people. The potential of work-based learning is multi-faceted:

- pedagogical: under certain conditions it can be the most effective way of integrating practical and theoretical learning
- curricular: work-based learning allows the curriculum to keep up with changing workplace practices, and it provides a bridge between the cultures of the school and the 'world of work'
- motivational : it may motivate young people to participate and learn, particularly those who are bored or alienated by full-time education:
- social and economic integration: it provides adult roles for young people, particularly for those who most at risk of dropping out of the system altogether; it may also smooth the transition into the labour market
- diversity: contributes to the diversity and flexibility of opportunities required in a modern education and system

The workplace can be a creative and motivating place for learning, if an integrated and holistic approach is taken, enabling young people to combine on- and off the job learning experiences in a way which creates an 'upwards' spiral of learning through activity and perception. The concept of an LCP provides a useful model for considering how the different partners who come together in creating the work-based learning experience might complement each other. At the centre of the community are the young people who combine theoretical and practical knowledge with skills. Both workplace and off-job learning are organised in such a way that young people can demonstrate as well as acquire new skills and knowledge, and gain in confidence through demonstrating their potential as workers and learners.

The 'pedagogy of work' (Fuller and Unwin, 2002) may be practised in a way which develops meaningful links between learning, production and the organisation of work. This is an expansive approach to situated learning, which incorporates, but goes far beyond the practice of key (or transferable) skills and encourages the questioning of workplace practices. The main departure from previous approaches is in the move away from predominantly individualistic conceptions which have underpinned policy development in the last decade. The new work-based learning is neither predominantly individualistic in conception nor predominantly collective, but it involves a combination of individual and mutual learning.

But the workplace or workshop activity is most significant as the source of ' new beginnings' in the biographical versions of lifelong learning, which emphasise links between skills development and transitions in different domains of life, recognises non standard 'patchwork' careers, and focuses on what 'being and becoming' rather than learner deficits. Workplaces are thus significant sites of learning. They involve experience –based 'lifeworld' learning in context – but do they expand or constrain the lifeworld learning- do people become what they already are, through social reproduction (in Bourdieu's terms) or what they could be (through social transformation.) What are the transformative possibilities of workplace learning, in reality?

In our expanded view of situated learning, learning begins with but has to extend beyond, direct experience on which it draws. Multiple purposes are embodied within it without collapsing it wholly into the values of the particular work or community service experience which it seeks to use as a learning resource. If learning is to be transformative, not reproductive, the challenges and spaces must be present for *educated attributes to develop*. This is another respect in which our LCPs extend substantially beyond the communities of practice envisaged in the situated learning theories of Lave. These ideas have been explored in relation to the goals and aims of Re-Enter programmes, and the various shapes these take in differing national contexts.

11. GOALS AND AIMS OF RE-ENTER PROGRAMMES

Our research started with the proposition that it is the step from school to vocational education and training which seems to need special support, compared with upper secondary education or the direct entrance into the labour market. For young persons with a history of low achievements or language problems school based education is not very attractive; but to start working immediately after school however often limits career perspectives to low graded employment. Moreover, success in school to VET transition is strongly dependent on the concrete shaping of this system of transition. How do mechanisms of selection and exclusion work and how inclusive are measures of support?

A closer comparative examination of programmes in Europe, which have been designed to ease the transition from school to vocational education and training, gives evidence to different approaches to this problem, resulting from different educational systems and different historical and cultural traditions.

In *Belgium* Re-Enter is[1] firstly a problem for the drop-outs in secondary education (with no qualifications). Flanders has a high participation rate in secondary education: on average, 97% of the young people between the age of 11 and 17 are in secondary education. However, there are still a lot of students who do not complete upper secondary education and leave education without a qualification. An estimation of the percentage of drop-outs showed that approximately 10% leave secondary education without any certifications (Van Damme, a/o, internal report, p. 51). Secondly there is also a Re-Enter problem for people with qualifications which are insufficient for access to employment. This group can be further widened to include those who do not have an additional qualification after the completion of upper secondary general education (ASO) and those who do not have relevant vocational qualifications. Although the consequences of the extension of compulsory education have in general been positive a differentiation of pupils lies beyond the capacities of the school system. The annual class system and the linear curriculum cannot correspond to the diverging profiles and needs of the vocational college pupils, which leads to a large proportion of young people lagging behind and dropping out. Furthermore the link between teaching content of vocational education and the qualification requirements of the labour market is not very strong: there is too much fragmentation, some subjects are no longer adapted to labour market requirements and there is not enough co-operation with other training bodies and with the business community.

In *Germany* school leavers from lower secondary school face the most difficulties in finding a place in VET. They have to overcome three 'thresholds' for a successful entrance to the labour market.

The first important step after finishing compulsory schooling, that has to be taken by young people, is to find a place in the system of vocational education and training, either for an apprenticeship or at a vocational school. Their main difficulties can be summed up by problems with career-choice, applications and entrance tests the apprenticeship market and number of places available and the motivation to stay in training. But there are two more periods, where the risk of quitting the education and/or employment proves to be especially high: during the apprenticeship and after having completed it. About 21% of all training contracts have been dissolved before time in 1997 (21.4% in the eastern, 21.9% in the western part of Germany). 25% of them during the probationary period, 47% during the first year, 32% during the second year and 19% during the third year. After having completed an apprenticeship or finished vocational school it is difficult again to find a job. Access to higher education / university is exclusively dependent on having the respective school-certificate, thus blocking the way to higher education. Transition to work will be difficult, too, especially for those leaving from training centres.

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[1] Gerald Heidegger, Beatri x Niemeyer, Teresa Morais de Oliveira, Teresa Coelho, Lourenzo Frazao, Mia Douterlungne, Katrien Van Valckenborgh, Karen Evans, Bettina Hoffmann, Anja Heikkinen, Kristiina Laiho, Margarita Defingos, First Workshop Report of the Socrates Project 'Re-Enter. Improving Transition of Low-Achieving School-Leavers to Vocational Education and Training'. Flensburg, September 1999 (unpublished).

The area you live in: east or west of Germany is of influence. Further structural difficulties shaping the problem zones are guidance and counselling systems which are strongly oriented towards the labour market and do not sufficiently take into consideration young persons` individual abilities and needs. There are hardly any links between school and labour market, the school does not teach enough about working life and teachers do not feel adequately prepared for the target group.

In the *Finnish* context a typical choice after completing upper secondary school is to study at the university. It is also possible to enter a vocational school or polytechnic. This is not highly appreciated and often considered to be a second best alternative when a person has not passed the entrance-examination on the university level. The re-entry problem among upper secondary school leavers is marginal.

One of the future challenges of educational policies is to make the vocational education both in secondary (vocational institutions) and higher (polytechnic) level attractive to young people. It is a fact that the number of students at the university level will not be increased so that many of upper secondary school leavers have to make other plans for the future than university level studies.

The group that does not enter secondary education is rather small, although the number of these young people is growing. Alternatives are few if a young person lacks a job or has no interest in entering VET. The 'stick and carrot' labour market policy forces the young person to choose some kind of activity: job placement (subsidised employment) or courses in labour market training. Of course, there are young people who do not attend any of the above mentioned activities. These young people live at the expense of their parents or friends and are one target group for the re-entry measures.

The drop out rate from vocational education and training is said to be over 10%. E.g. the main newspaper in Finland, Helsingin Sanomat[2] interviewed some headteachers, who argued that vocational schools have a serious problem of drop out of about 13-15%. This rate has risen in recent years, because a generation of youth, who were subject to all kinds of economisations during the depression, has embarked on vocational education and training. Diminished guidance and social club activities together with bigger classes are reasons for the high drop out. Therefore, students are restless and they have serious barriers to learning. The fact that they break off their studies is also interpreted as a critique. Young people refuse to stay in a school which proves to be uninteresting or cannot be utilised. Many of the school leavers enter vocational education and training after some time. They often start in another kind of education, for example in apprenticeship training. In the school dominated system of vocational education and training the question of social integration depends on the inflexibility of the educational system. Vocational schools do not act appropriately to attract young people, who do not want to sit in a classroom for eight hours a day.

In *Great Britain* there is no pre-requisition for entering vocational training. Prior qualifications are not essential to get onto the bottom rung of the National Vocational Qualifications (NVQ) ladder, which extends from a very basic level 1

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[2] 22nd August 99

through to high skills at the top. Entry at higher levels does have prerequisites but these tend to be applied quite flexibly, and no generalisations can made about employers' attitudes towards employing young people without qualifications. Larger employers require higher and higher level entry qualifications, and most carry out their own further training but for small enterprises, attitude and motivation are often still the most important prerequisites. One can say that the pre-requisite lies with the employers' evaluations, and some will accept young people with low level of prior school achievements if they consider them trainable for particular tasks. The vocational training system differs from the academic system, there is less emphasis on doing grades/qualifications, instead the accentuation lies more on experience, perceived 'trainability' for the specific job, on inter-personal 'qualification', personal worth, and the development of 'knowhow'. Personal attributes and competences often count as much as credits or qualification. Furthermore there is a strong pull of the youth labour market, there are well paid low skilled jobs available, which draw people from training schemes. The consumer culture, also contributes to drop-out from training to take up better paid casual jobs, while status and quality of many of the schemes remains low and they are criticised for abuses which use low cost workers and forget about the training aspects.

What choices do young people with no qualifications have in *Portugal*? In the big cities they survive within a marginal economy system, they can work in family or small enterprises or in low qualified jobs without any permanent or regular work contract. In the countryside the agriculture is an alternative. It depends on the person's social background, the economic/social environment and the local situation of the labour market. The motivation to choose VET is not very strong, because there are many alternatives to make a living without undergoing a special vocational training. While in the big cities young males have the chance to earn a living with unskilled or even illegal occupations, the problem is to motivate them for training and education and to reach them by training schemes. Peer counselling is one approach to this problem.

Greece is characterised by a high participation rate in secondary education, reaching 87% on average for the age group of 12 to 17 years old, being higher for the 16 - 18 years old. That means that there is a large number of young people that have not completed the upper secondary level education because they have dropped out.

This group can be even larger if you include the high school certificate students that have completed the general secondary level education, without any technical or vocational training and they have not passed the University entrance exams. These young people have no qualifications to enter the labour market, therefore there is a great need to re-enter the educational and training process and acquire qualifications.

A comparative examination of the strategies and policies of these European countries reveals that a very common answer to the problem of youth unemployment in many countries has been the extension of schooling. An additional year of school has been introduced in many European (e.g. Finland, Germany, Portugal) countries, but this measure soon turned out to be of very limited effect. For the young people attending this additional year of school it often served as a waiting loop or had the

effect of a revolving-door – after this year the risk of unemployment had not reduced and for the majority their qualifications did not rise significantly. Belgium in this context can be seen as a possible exception. Here compulsory schooling has been extended up to the age of 18 with the effect of reduced social stratification.[3]

It became quite obvious, from the experiences of many of the countries, that the risk of becoming disaffected during the stage of school to VET transition was not only to be approached by traditional educational means like the extension of schooling. School practices often are insufficiently prepared to deal with very heterogeneous groups of learners (lack of individualisation). Links between school and labour market or the world of work in most of the countries are very poor. Competences, social as well as technical, which are needed outside school are often hardly to be found in the curriculum. Workplace realities do not play a role in teaching and learning. Students lack opportunities for a broad career orientation. Still, at least in countries with rather structured VET systems school leaving certificates are of crucial importance for apprenticeship/job placement and can be seen as keys opening up the doors to the labour market and to participation in society.

Structural risks with school to VET transition
- failure of traditional solution of extension of schooling
- lack of individualisation in learning opportunities
- missing link between school and workplace practices and realities
- lacking opportunities for career orientation
- crucial selective function of school leaving certificates
- low esteem for the work based route/preference for higher education
- preventive measures, e. g. special guidance seems to be underdeveloped in many countries.
- in measures trying to combine working and learning there is often a gap between tutors at school and tutors at the work place.
- neither of the above seems to be adequately prepared for the difficulties of the target groups

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We have shown that these programmes aim to promote the trainability and the employability of the young and to support their social integration, to re-motivate them for training and education, to qualify them for the labour market and to enable them for participating citizenship. In general these programmes are designed as a

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[3] In Belgium extension of compulsory schooling in general .has produced apparently positive effects 'The social profile of the young people reveals that, in particular, young people form poorly educated environments are affected by the law extending compulsory education. A comparison between 1981 (before the extension of compulsory education) and 1991 in terms of the participation figures for full-time education of young people shows us that social stratification was still a reality in 1991, although it was less pronounced than 10 years ago. In 1981, only 54% of 17-year-olds from a poorly qualified background (head of household unqualified) were in full-time education, as opposed to 98% of young people form a highly qualified background (head of household has university qualification); a difference of 44%. In 1991, 88% of young people from a poorly qualified background were in full-time education, compared to 99% of young people from a highly qualified background. Social stratification still exists, but the difference has shrunk from 44% to 11%.

bridge between school and labour market. A closer consideration, however, reveals a diversity of intentions, and above all diverging approaches towards the target group of young people living at risk of disengagement. Re-Enter programmes have to give a valuable answer to those young persons who have developed a resistance to schooling and training and do not feel addressed by the established institutions of vocational education and training. Lack of motivation is the most common feature of young persons resistant to training and learning. Engagement emotionally, socially, intellectually, is the major challenge of programmes. As the majority of Re-Enter schemes are established outside the formal educational and vocational system, most of them are unthinkable without funding. They lead into links with the formal systems in different ways.

A European comparison of school to VET transition as a troubled process should include the educational institutions in which Re-Enter programmes are embedded: School systems are challenged by the question in how far they prepare young persons for further learning, for training, the conditions of the labour market and a working day life - if their practices open up or rather narrow minds and expectations, if they empower young persons to take the next step on a career ladder or if they rather impose hurdles. VET systems, no matter how they might be structured and organised, have also to be questioned. As well as asking how adequately young people are prepared for VET, we can ask how adequately VET is prepared are they for the changing needs of young people. How flexible are they in responding to learners' (not only to employers') needs, how far do they reflect shared social responsibility for a future generation? From this perspectives Re-Enter programmes have a remedial function with respect to the shortcomings of the established educational institutions and a curative function with regard to youth unemployment figures, too.

The educational concept of Re-Enter programmes will generally be oriented towards the regular VET structures in a given country. Programmes therefore do have an inner link with the respective national VET systems, their structures being of influence on their contents and learning concepts to a large extent. Where work based training is a central element of the VET system (e.g. Germany) programmes offer support for those young who cannot keep pace without additional help, be it for personal or social reasons. They provide a substitute for the training places lacking in the labour market, offer alternative routes or help to continue with VET by showing a comparably caring approach. Where VET is strongly school related (e.g. Finland) another intention of programmes is to promote the work-based route as a valuable alternative, with high potential for learning and social integration. But as the case of Finland shows, it is of importance to consider how Re-Enter programmes are linked to the existing VET structures, if and how they can be integrated in the national system of vocational education, if and how their specific educational approaches can become part of the mainstream education. In countries where it is popular to enter the labour market directly (e.g. Greece) the idea of training and learning as a possibility to escape the trap of poverty and low skilled, low paid jobs is of higher importance. Still, there are very few programmes in Greece, where many small enterprises offer job opportunities without training,

thereby integrating young people during a stage of career orientation rather than excluding them. In Portugal education and training is also strongly linked to vocational schools, which shapes the approach of teachers and trainers and educational planners towards the problem of (re-) entering VET. In Great Britain however many options in the big variety of training programmes on offer continue to suffer from a lack of co-ordination and low standards of quality, despite the efforts to mainstream them through the 'foundation apprenticeship' model of youth training.

Intentions of European Re-Enter Programmes
- Promote trainability
- Promote employability
- Bridge the gap between school and VET/labour market
- Cure shortcomings of the school system
- Reduce youth unemployment
- Substitute VET
- Support VET
- Promote VET
- Motivate for VET
- Qualify for VET
- Cure shortcomings of mainstream VET
- Support young persons with learning troubles
- Offer alternative routes
- Offer career orientation
- Promote the work based route
- Promote the idea of training and learning

Despite these diverse and complex underlying intentions Re-Enter programmes often are judged according to their effects on unemployment figures by taking on the perspective of economy, calculating the social costs of integration – a view, which certainly prevails in most of evaluation activities.[4] In contrast to this the contributions in this volume argue from a different perspective, stressing educational and sociological topics. Workplace practices and the assumed expectations of the future labour market are questioned for their impact on the societal shaping of learning. The tension between the intensification of life and work and the time and space necessary for the individuals to keep up with, learning and to develop a personal perspective or strategy is referred to. And it is asked how the 'otherness' of those who leave the so-called normal pathway is constructed. A questioning approach concentrates not on their deficits but recognises their potentials, their creativity in problem solving and organising instead. The integrative potentials of the 'normal' VET is challenged by the question: how can the educational and training system (as a central part of society) be made sufficiently attractive for young

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[4] A recent CEDEFOP survey stated that there is a lack of criteria to value the quality of any re-enter programme other than by the money it costs (Nicaise et al, 1995).

persons at the fringe of society to motivate them to stay, to start and continue a career? Criteria according to which young persons are considered to be inadequately prepared for vocational education and training will be added by criteria according to which vocational education and training seems inadequately prepared for young people.

Re-Enter programmes are themselves situated in a framework of institutions and regulations and are object to overlapping sometimes contradicting, spheres of influence: social policy, employment policy, economy, VET institutions, culture, history.

12. DIFFERING ECONOMIC CONDITIONS AND CULTURAL VALUES AND THE WAYS IN WHICH THESE ARE REFLECTED IN POLICY.

We have contextualised our analysis of Re-Enter programmes in the wider features of their respective economic and cultural settings from the outset. In Portugal special attention was paid to less industrialised rural regions where entering the labour market for the first time will play a decisive role. In Greece we recognised that the gap in industrial and social conditions between the agglomeration of population in the Athens region and the job opportunities in other areas of the country poses major problems. In Finland, the fast growth of unemployment, particularly of women, in recent years has posed particular challenges. In the UK, it has been important to see the re-entry measures put into practice during the last years, in the context of several successive reforms of the educational system and the social security system. In Belgium, dramatic changes are occurring due to reductions in government expenditure in the course of meeting the Maastricht criteria. In Germany there is, a special situation in the eastern Länder, where the percentage of women in gainful employment had been very high some years ago. In the western part, special conditions prevail because of large layoffs especially in the modern production and services industries. Therefore the aim of enabling most of the young people to re-enter this specific sector of the labour market may be questionable. All of these are issues in the socio-political contexts which need to be appreciated, understood and engaged with in understanding the various manifestations of Re-Enter practice.

Sung (2000) in a recent article contrasts typologies of education, training and skill formation systems emanating from educationalists with those emanating from economists and labour market/ analysts. Educational approaches are portrayed as predominantly concerned with the attempt to identify models of educational provision. Labour market models, by contrast, 'start from the assumption that labour markets are structured and often highly segmented and that this will have an impact on types of VET provision'. Moreover, distinctions are drawn between occupational and internal labour markets that have importance for the different models of skill acquisition and explain some of the systemic differences in pathways for young people in vocational education and training. A weakness of labour market approaches is that they ignore or underplay cultural origins and meanings. Between the European partners, different cultural norms apply concerning dependency and age of accession to adult status. The English 'Sonderweg' (exceptional track of

historical development) shows here in comparisons with most of northern continental Europe. In England, the approach of 'vocationalism' has been to surround young people with a range of work-related opportunities for learning relatively early in their educational careers, but the opportunities for progressing from learning into work are haphazard and risky. There is also a prolonged dependency associated with extended post-compulsory education, which runs counter to the deeply embedded cultural values and expectations of a significant proportion of the working class population, particularly among males.

In other parts of Northern Europe, young people are not expected to be earning until their 20s, there is not the same pull of the labour market and strong institutional structures allow for a degree of experimentation, false starts, and provide 'safety net' financial support for those for whom family support is not available. In the Southern countries, early work entry combined with later leaving of the parental home is more usual, with extended family networks which providing social and material support for longer periods of time.

Frameworks of welfare support are also highly significant. In most European countries there has been a general move to 'active' employment policies which have reduced welfare support in the form of benefits for young people, who are neither in education/training nor in employment. The countries vary greatly in the extent to which they rely on 'third' sector groups (- voluntary, religious bodies and non-profit or independent associations) for welfare support. In some countries these bodies will run many of the Re-Enter programmes, others will operate partnerships. For example, in Germany there are complex networks that authorities depend on for putting welfare policies into practice, with expansion of non-profit sector, while in Sweden the non-profit organisations are hardly used. In the Nordic countries, including Finland, institutionalised egalitarianism has historical roots but benefits system has come under stress when unemployment has risen. In Belgium there is yet another variation- programmes are, with half of the programmes provided by the non profit sector, with strong religious organisation-based providers.

13. INTRODUCTION TO THE CHAPTERS

Corresponding to the diversity of the problems with school to VET transition in Europe, the solutions on offer and strategies used to approach this problem differ according to national, political or educational variables. The answer cannot be a unified European integration strategy. Rather we aim to contextualise good practice on multiple levels, in order to achieve a deeper understanding of the underlying processes.

The following chapters work on the main features of our expanded concept of situated learning and give evidence of the specific structural and cultural conditions under which it can be applied. Each contribution has as its focus a special feature of the common concept of situated learning and elaborates it against the background of the specific national experiences. The concept is thus explicated from different angles, taking into account the respective structural and cultural conditions to which good Re-Enter practice has to relate to in each country. The contributions are based

on the respective practical experiences, but in their analysis they go beyond the national context and present answers to the question: what can other European countries learn from this practice? In this way the following chapters raise theoretical, conceptual and methodical issues and thereby contribute to elaborate a concept of situated learning which is both comprehensive from an European perspective and specific in its view of the field of study.

Chapter two (Bettina Hoffmann, Karen Evans) raises conceptual issues. Against the background of constructivist learning theories, especially the social theory of learning developed by Lave and Wenger (1991/1999), an expanded and comprehensive model of situated learning is proposed, which is suitable for the conditions of learning in Re-Enter programmes. With special regard to the target group it is argued that it is not enough to relate learning to work but to situate it in a socially meaningful context and to place it into a learning community centred on social practice. Learning can be well situated in three respects: practically, socially and culturally. The potential of learning communities is explored, not only for construction of the learning environment but also with respect to the institutional setting and to the framework of institutions collaborating to promote social inclusion through learning.

This aspect is taken up in the next chapter (Beatrix Niemeyer), which looks at Re-Enter programmes as a field in which professionals cooperate with the common aim of vocational and social integration of disadvantaged young persons. It is shown how concepts of situated learning and communities of learning and social practice can change our perspectives on organisational structures as well as on professional pedagogical approaches. This contrasts with German concepts of action-oriented learning, which was developed within a classroom oriented perspective. It is argued that situated learning offers a concept for holistic approaches, which can integrate theories, methods and practices of social workers, trainers and vocational teachers.

Re-Enter programmes as innovative practices can be implemented successfully in coherence with the existing VET structures and should build on good practice and experience already developed. The following chapter (Mia Douterlungne, Ilse Fripont, Katrien Van Valckenborgh) presents such an example of good practice, where the concept of situated learning is connected to the established Belgian model of 'route counselling'. The emphasis here is on reaching out into the world of the young person instead of providing guidance and 'parenting' approaches. It also emphasises long-term follow up, providing subsequent steps of support fine tuned to the person's needs. Also used with unemployed adults.

The idea of linking learning to the everyday context of the young is further developed in chapter five (Teresa Oliveira, Lourenço Frazao). Here it is asked how the concepts and models discussed earlier affect the roles of teachers and trainers, and consequently how the training of teachers and trainers can be changed to prepare for a learner-oriented, socially and individually situated practice. A model is proposed, suggesting a shared learning experience of the clients and the teachers, helping the teachers and trainers to learn more about the social lives of the young. In this way, the dangers of basing aspects of practice on wrong assumptions are

reduced. This extends the ideas of situated learning to the field of teachers training, and shows how the approach can be inserted into existing structures and institutions.

The following chapter six (Anja Heikkinen) asks how Re-Enter programmes should be situated in the structure of the existing VET system. Based on the comparatively recent experience with Re-Enter schemes in the Finnish context this contribution raises the critical issue that special programmes addressing 'problem groups' help to produce their clients and thereby contribute to the continuation of the problem. For the time being, an established school-based VET system with a high integrative potential coexists with new models specially addressing 'school -weary' young people and offering a work based alternative. Thus this chapter directs the perspective to the important and fundamental question about the integrating or excluding effects of programmes and VET structures. How should programmes designed to promote social inclusion be situated in relation to existing schooling and VET structures and systems? Does targeting of 'problem groups' reproduce the problem, and contribute to its continuation? With reference to good practice examples, it is argued that the integrative potential of mainstream policies should not be overlooked in favour of 'special measures'. What are the integrating and excluding effects of programmes and education/training structures themselves? What are the lessons for policy-makers?

Chapter 7 (Elias Ioakimoglou, Nikitas Patiniotis, Dimitra Kondyli) extends the macro-perspective focusing on the relationship between social inclusion policies and the wider socio-economic conditions. It argues, from an economists' perspective, that employment opportunities for the target group of these programmes will remain restricted in a future European labour market. It weighs up the potential of situated learning approaches for the future conditions of the European labour market, and points out the integrative potential a small business economy has for early school leavers, in spite of weak VET structures.

The focus on individual growth and learning through engagement and meaningful participation present challenges for all actors in the field. The final chapters (Gerald Heidegger, Beatrix Niemeyer, Karen Evans) conclude the book by reviewing the challenges and ways forward for the policy and practice communities.

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BETTINA HOFFMANN AND KAREN EVANS

ENGAGING TO LEARN:
SITUATED LEARNING AND RE-INTEGRATION FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter examines the place of situated learning in effective measures to improve the transitions of school leavers to vocational education and training. The focus is the teaching and learning contents and methods applied within Re-Enter initiatives for young people who leave educational systems (mainly lower secondary education) without adequate preparation for vocational education and training (VET). An aim is to support educational reform with regard to these initiatives both at the macro level of educational planning and at the micro level of individual initiatives. In this chapter the authors analyse and discuss UK cases with reference to criteria and frameworks for the development of Learning Communities centred on Practice.

We have argued earlier that *work-based learning* has a valuable part to play in the initial education and training of young people. The view that the broad-based skills required by the future economy can best be delivered through extended schooling and mass higher education under-estimates the potential of a work-based route. There is a cultural and institutional legacy of work-based training in countries such as Britain and Germany. This form of situated learning potentially plays a part in countering the social and economic exclusion of a growing minority of young people. The potential of work-based learning is multi-faceted:

- pedagogical: under certain conditions it can be the most effective way of integrating practical and theoretical learning
- curricular: work-based learning allows the curriculum to keep up with changing workplace practices, and it provides a bridge between the cultures of the school and the 'world of work'
- motivational: it may motivate young people to participate and learn, particularly those who are bored or alienated by full-time education:
- social and economic integration: it provides adult roles for young people, particularly for those who most at risk of dropping out of the system altogether; it may also smooth the transition into the labour market
- diversity: contributes to the diversity and flexibility of opportunities required in a modern education and system

The workplace can be a creative and motivating place for learning, if an integrated and holistic approach is taken, enabling young people to combine on- and

off the job learning experiences in a way which creates an 'upwards' spiral of learning through activity and perception. The concept of a 'learning community centred on practice' provides a useful model for considering how the different partners who come together in creating the work-based learning experience might complement each other. At the centre of the community are the young people who combine theoretical and practical knowledge with skills. Both workplace and off-job learning are organised in such a way that young people can demonstrate as well as acquire new skills and knowledge, and gain in confidence through demonstrating their potential as workers and learners. An expanded approach which can incorporate both social and vocational pedagogies in a way that is centred on work is proposed here. This involves an approach to situated learning, which incorporates, but goes far beyond the specific areas of practical activity engaged in by the young person. The main departure from previous approaches is in the move away from the predominantly individualistic conceptions which have underpinned policy developments in the last decade. The new work-based learning is neither predominantly individualistic in conception nor predominantly collective, but it involves a combination of individual and mutual learning. The main concepts involved are mapped in Figure 1 below.
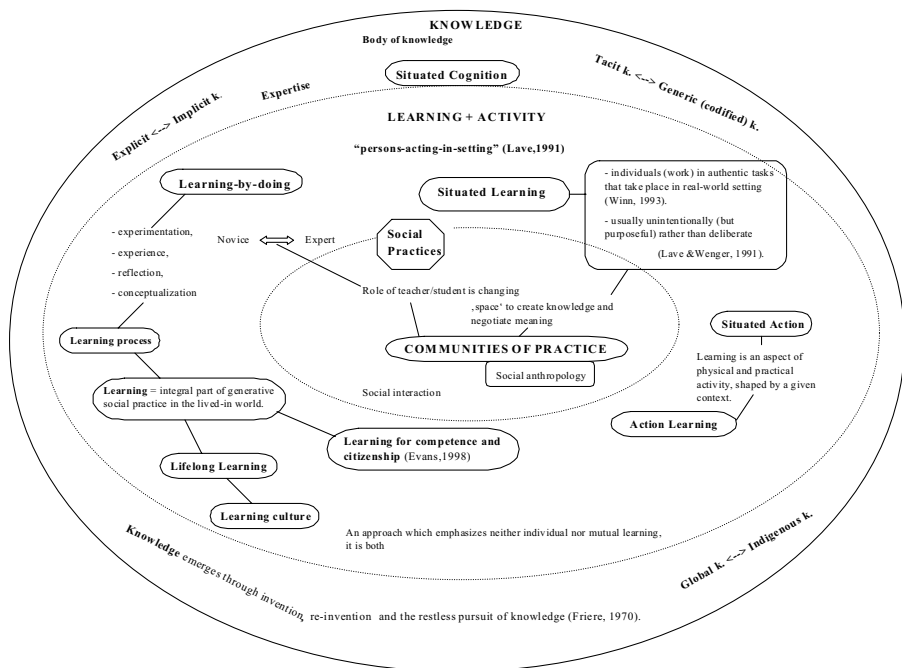

Figure 1. Situated Learning: A Map of Relevant Concepts.

2. KEY SKILLS AND SITUATED LEARNING

Key skills have played a central part in the debate about improving VET and the work relevance of learning programmes in all sectors of education in the UK. The first major attempt to identify key skills and develop 'situated' means of assessing these in work-based learning is recorded in Evans et al 1986, which evaluated the national Government-funded Core Skills Development Programme within the context of youth training schemes.

While the key skills necessary to effective work performance could relatively easily be identified (Number, Communication, IT, Problem-Solving and Practical Skills) their assessment was highly problematic, as their existence had to be inferred from situated performance. Attempts to measure levels of performance consistently and with validity produced a byzantine complexity of lists, specifications and formats. Questions surrounding the assumptions of transferability and the conditions for successful transfer were obscured rather than resolved by the repeated attempts to produce measurable specifications. In learning at and through the workplace and work-related activities, the most important questions now focus on the processes, both cognitive and social, which underlie the ability to learn and to transfer skills.

Evaluations of the part played by key skills in Vocational Qualifications have suggested an overemphasis on the mechanics of recording achievement in these skills, in ways which are sufficiently reliable and consistent for formal accreditation, may obscure their powerful function as diagnostic and developmental tools. Simple recording/profiling of key skills as a means of identifying scope for further practice and development can be used as a means of continuous enhancement of work performance at all levels. They apply from school leaver to senior professional, such is their pervasive nature. But the evidence did begin to support the shift towards more holistic approaches to learning and assessment. For example, Soden (1993) showed that, in the key skill area of problem solving, 'good problem solvers have internal representations of fundamental principles relevant to their occupational area and these representations are connected to each other and to broader relevant knowledge' (p12). This and similar evidence has supported a re-emphasis on the theoretical knowledge-based aspects of learning in the development of occupational competence. The reflexive nature of learning extends beyond occupational competence. There is direct work relevance as well as good pedagogical reasons for using a group basis for project work and action learning given the prevalence of team and group working in contemporary workplaces and its significance in many life and work situations. While assessment methods for collaborative group activities continue to be underdeveloped, there is much scope for the promotion of a range of vocational and social competences through mutual learning and group work. In transitional programmes for school leavers, group work linked to experience and activity can be a powerful motivator, as some community programmes and outdoor education schemes have shown. For these effects to be sustained, these experiences need to be built into the long-term programmes with consistency in the approaches to competence and wider aspects of social learning adopted.

3. SITUATED LEARNING: WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

As discussed in Chapter 1, situated learning is an approach to thinking about and theorising learning which has generated much interest in recent times in EU debates about VET. It is important because it tries to understand more about the learning process which takes place informally in naturally occurring environments outside the structures of formal institutions, particularly the workplace.

Work placements and other forms of work-based learning have long been recognised as important elements of VET programmes, providing both experience and motivation. But the growth of unemployment and the need to support people in continuing education /training and in making occupational changes (without always starting again) has made it necessary to understand better how learning at, for and through the workplace happens and how it can be made more effective.

The concept of 'situatedness' emerged strongly in the 1980s. It was, in part, a reaction against the dominant views of learning derived from psychological traditions, which were characterised as:

- **Individual,** in the sense that the locus of intelligence is taken to be the single person:
- **Rational**, in that deliberative, conceptual thought is viewed as the primary example of cognition:
- **Abstract**, in the sense that implementation and the nature of the physical environment are treated as of secondary importance (if relevant at all);
- **Detached**, in the sense that thinking is treated separately from perception and action;
- **General**, in the sense that cognitive science is taken to be a search for universal principles, true of all individuals and applicable in all circumstances.

Situated approaches question all of the these assumptions, arguing instead that cognition (indeed all human activity) is:

- **Social,** in the sense of being located in humanly constructed settings among human communities:
- **Embodied,** in the sense that physical constraints of realisation and circumstance are viewed as of the utmost importance;
- **Located,** implying that context-dependence is a central and enabling feature of all human endeavour;
- **Specific,** dependent on particular circumstances;
- **Engaged,** in that on-going interaction with the surrounding environment is recognised as of primary importance.

Lave and Wenger (1991) have developed these ideas further. They argue, like Brown et al (1989), that learning, as it normally occurs is a function of the activity, context and culture in which it occurs. In that sense it is 'situated'.
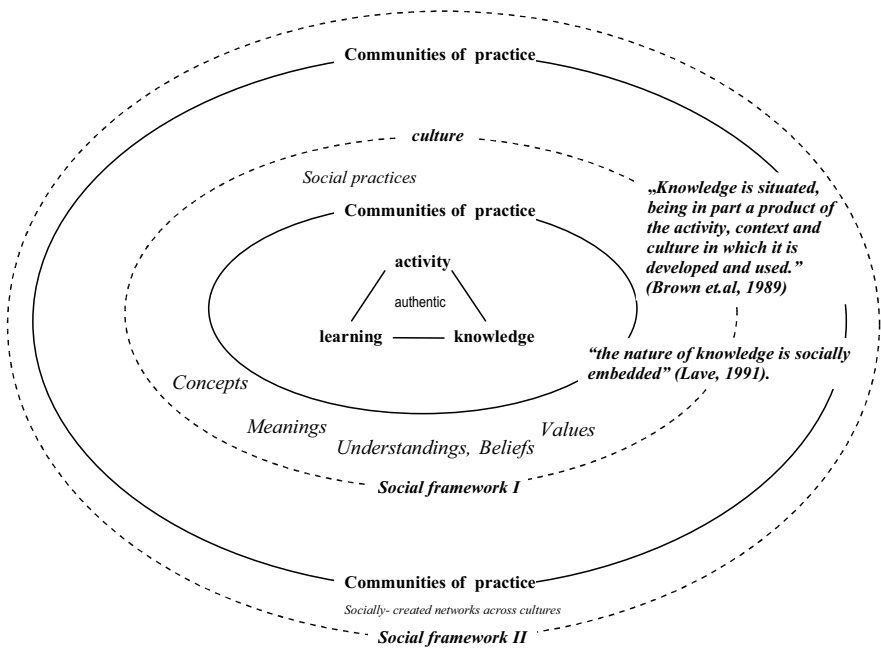
Figure 2. Situated learning: its inner and outer social frameworks.

Conceptual knowledge is built up and understood through use and activity in social settings. This contrasts with those classroom learning activities which involve knowledge that is abstract and learned 'out of context'.

Social interaction is a critical component of situated learning. Extending that idea, learners become involved in a "*Community on Practice*" which embodies certain beliefs and behaviours to be acquired. According to Lave and Wenger, the beginners or newcomers move from the periphery of the community into the centre, they become more active and engaged within the culture and eventually assume the role of expert or old-timer. As they do so they become able to influence that community in different ways. This feature is not linear nor simple, in that expert status also has to be continuously renewed and newcomers can challenge with fresh ways of thinking.

Communities of practice form themselves or are set up within *social frameworks* (see figure 2) These are explained broadly as the environment which all communities of practice share. *Outer social frameworks* are created by the outer world and are hard (but not impossible) to influence – e.g. legislation, geographical / cultural conditions, power structures in organisations. *Inner social frameworks* are generated through the communities of practice themselves (plus societies with altered values and beliefs).

Concepts of the situated approach to learning can be found in different ways in specific national discourses about VET. As Chapter 1 discussed, our working definition, which is linked to, but does not rely exclusively on, the ideas of Lave and Wenger, is as follows:

-    A specific *approach* to learning, viewing learning as a *social process* of interaction situated in a *community of social practice*.

-    A *set of methods* situating learning in an *authentic context*

-    A *process* aiming for *full participation*.

Our aim in examining these ideas in relation to programmes for young people at the margins of society is to test ideas of situated learning in a context in which learning and engagement are troubled processes (both for young people and society). In this way we are beginning to test the limits of current theorising. We ask ' Does better recognition of the situated nature of learning enable us to strengthen learning processes and prospects of learning success, through 'engagement' of learners?

4. LEARNING AND ENGAGEMENT

The follow hypotheses have been developed from the perspectives on learning adopted in this study.

1.   Learning may be situated in three ways:
     * *practically*
     * in *culture* of the workplace
     * in the *social world* of the participants

2.   Learning which is *well-situated* in each of these three ways will promote learner engagement and learning success

3.   Learning which is *poorly situated* in any of these three respects may lack learner engagement and limit the prospects of learning success.

In arguing that learning may be well situated or poorly situated, we have the following scenarios in mind.

Situation of learning in *practical* tasks has been a method used in educational programmes ranging from woodwork classes in school to the experiment in the science laboratory or the workshop activity in the VET programme. Learning which is well situated in a practical sense occurs when the task has meaning and the status of being somehow 'necessary'. Making an artefact which is of no interest, no use and does not use up to date tools or methods is less likely to engage the learner than making an artefact which does have those characteristics.

Similarly, experimentation which arises in response to a problem identified 'naturally' by the learner is more likely to engage his or her interest and motivate than an experiment poorly linked to personal questions and curiosity.

In the workplace, practical tasks of an 'authentic' kind, which are performed as part of the daily work process by full workers, are more likely to involve the transactions which go on around the performance of real work tasks. The participant is more likely to be ready to learn from 'doing' them.

This then extends into *the culture of the workplace*. Here, the power of authentic work settings as opposed to simulated workshop environments can be harnessed. The culture of the workplace embodies the social practices which are crucial to engagement and learning. A learning activity which well situated enables participation in elements of the work, as a member of a team or working group, while poorly situated learning in relation to the culture of the workplace might be, for example, short-term work experience involving being found odd jobs to do, watching/observational activity, workshop or training activity in a college. Yet as soon as learning interventions are made in structured ways, participants may be exposed to norms and expectations which are significantly changed from those found in 'natural' workgroups formed in the context of employer – employee relationships. The power relations are thus disturbed. There are also tensions in availability of time and resource, and the 'speed' of many modern workplaces.

Activities which are known not to represent 'real' work are likely to result in less engagement, in programmes where a primary goal is re-entry to the labour market. But, in modern workplaces how can conflicts between the authenticity of the activity and the time/ resources required for learning be resolved?

Learning has also, we argue, to be well situated in *the social world of the participants* in the sense of taking the social and biographical position of the learner fully into account as a starting and creating the learning environment and activities needed; recognising strengths (not deficits), and building positively on previous experience to overcome and impediments to learning. Learners who feel valued and recognised as having contributions to make in a real environment are more likely to become engaged than those who are 'targeted' with reference to a list of deficits and problems. Yet many programmes fall down on at least ONE of these criteria.

5. EXAMPLES OF 'GOOD PRACTICE' – WHAT DO WE MEAN BY 'GOOD'?

In order to work towards the meta-analysis we were concerned with defining the 'good' in 'good practice' in operation in the selected 'Re-Enter' schemes/ programmes. The selected examples for the UK were as follows:

5.1 The Learning Gateway for 16-17 year olds'

Programme co-ordinator: The Learning Business Link Company Ltd, UK.
This programme embodies approaches to learning that are focused on the development of the whole person, an 'holistic' view. This recognises that all aspects of a person's life style make up the whole person and the influences these have must

be considered. The approaches encompass, under the umbrella of learning- social and practical and personal skills, self esteem, self-efficacy as well as developing specific knowledge. The programme is concerned with 'moving the person forward' whatever the starting level. It ensures that the young people receive support at the level appropriate to their capabilities. This recognises that learners differ in their preferred learning styles and ensures that these preferences are identified at the initial assessment stage.

5.2 A 'New Deal Programme'

Programme co-ordinator: Employment Service (ES), UK

The ES in West London has recognised that the 'New Deal' focuses on the individual but also relies on the quality of a New Deal Personal Advisor and the relationship established with the young person. The assistance of the Personal Advisor is pivotal to the young person's future, as both the young person and the employer are encouraged and assisted to look at the job in its broadest sense so that a learning programme can be developed that enables the development of a wide range of vocational and social competences. The Personal Adviser, when placing young people in work placements will aim to influence both parties to realise that this position may not be 'just a job' but a long-term enskilling programme that will bring benefits both to the trainee and the employer. The inter-linked development of theory and practice plays an important part in this programme.

5.3 The 'Motivate' Project

Programme co-ordinator: The Guildford Institute, Surrey, UK

This project conceptualises the programme as an evolving 'learning community centred on practice', where learning is shared and experienced by all participating parties. It promotes 'situated learning' by offering *multiple learning modes* based on intensive personalised support and guidance to suit the need of the single beneficiary. Elements of *situated learning* and *learning environments* are incorporated to ensure social interaction, and provision of authentic opportunities for learners to experience subject matter in the context of real-world challenges that allow them to acquire knowledge and understanding of their situation.

Having already identified 'effective' practices we return to the point where we need to explain what we mean by 'good', and why we think the examples are examples of 'good' practice. For those experiencing life transitions, new knowledge, competences, work-related skills and attitudes can best be acquired and developed in a 'situated learning' context. For Lave and Wenger (1991) 'situatedness of activity appeared to be … about the relational character of knowledge and learning, and about the concerned (engaged, dilemma-driven) nature of learning activity for the people involved (p.33)'. Therefore it is necessary to focus on the three interacting elements (see Figure 4) within the learning process or at the three constitutive

elements of the concept of 'situated learning': the agent, the activity, and the world (Lave and Wenger, 1991).
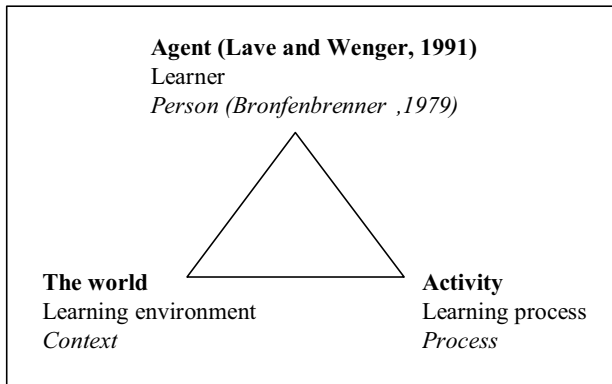
Agent (Lave and Wenger, 1991)
Learner
Person (Bronfenbrenner ,1979)

The world
Learning environment
Context

Activity
Learning process
Process

Figure 3. Interacting elements of 'situated learning'.

   The examples demonstrate 'good practice' as they each represent a model of learning and a way of educating based at least partly on a 'situated learning' approach, an holistic view and an integration of human beings and their communities rather than separation and fragmentation. This places learning in the context of the lived experience of participation in the world. The holistic view includes a whole-person learning; an approach that addresses the whole individual: mind, (emotion) sensation and action (see Ileris (2002) Beckett and Hager (2002). The mind, the sensational and the physical part have to be addressed in a learning situation to transform learning into 'effective' learning. It describes the engagement of the cognitive, affective, somatic and intuitive elements of an individual in learning.
   Here the emphasis is 'on comprehensive understanding involving the whole person rather than receiving a body of factual knowledge about the world; on activity in and with the world; and on the view that agent, activity and the world mutually constitute each other' (Lave and Wenger, 1991, p.33). It furthermore includes learning in 'communities of practice' which combines individual and social learning. For the individual as a learner, social learning is learning in the context of an LCP that enables and supports personal/social learning. 'Good' practice means that the programmes aim at reaching out for the individual participant, acknowledging and valuing their specific needs, interests and situations. Since the participants experience specific (problematic, difficult) situations and circumstances, it is well recognised that the learning/teaching/educational theories and practices have to move far beyond the 'traditional' model of teachers as 'purveyors of knowledge' and learners as recipients. One of the advantages of the situated learning approach for these learners is that here the creation of knowledge and the development of skills is embedded within a context that reflects the learner's situation, a real-life situation involving individual and collective elements.

6. FEATURES OF 'SITUATED LEARNING' IN THE EXAMPLES

All examples show 'good practice' in the way in which they incorporate features of 'situated learning'. The examples do not incorporate all the features uniformly, some strongly reflect some features, others strongly reflect other features, and there are inevitably some contradictions where programme designs have been eclectic in gathering of 'what works'. Each of the presented examples constructs or provides a series of learning environments that employ principles and elements of 'situated learning'. In contrast to McMellan (1994) who summarises key components of 'situated learning': 'apprenticeship, collaboration, reflection, coaching, multiple practice and articulation of learning skills' (p.7) the contributions of the observed and described examples indicate a far more comprehensive and expanded framework. Here 'situated learning' can be seen as a framework for the design of LCPs. Learning will be fostered and knowledge when created in learning environments that feature the following characteristics:

- Facilitate/provide 'authentic' activity.
- Provide a context that reflects the way knowledge is used and developed in real-life.
- Provide insight through multiple perspectives and changing roles for the members of the community.
- Support collaborative construction of knowledge.
- Provide support and aid/help, mentoring as a safety net.
- Promote reflection to enable abstractions.
- Promote articulation to enable tacit competencies to be made explicit.
- Provide a clarification for one's own position.

The situated learning perspective also draws upon the learner's previous experiences, links concepts and practices, encourages reflection and the transfer of knowledge from one situation to another.

6.1 Activity

The learner has to act in order to find the solution to the problem. The problems occur from the situation of the learner itself, they are real-world problems, and the dealing with them requires 'authentic' activities. The learner has furthermore to interact with the 'community of practice', other learners and trainers in order to find solutions and explore possibilities.

6.2 Multiple perspectives and changing roles

A situated learning environment provides the learner with the opportunity to investigate multiple roles and perspectives. This can take place either as a real 'try-out' (work tasters, work experience) or in thinking several strategies and possibilities through, and discussing them with peers and the personal advisors. The LCP will provide a variety and range of perspectives as an opportunity for the learners to

explore several possibilities and allow them to 'choose' and live multiple roles. This allows the learner to become fully engaged in the community and the process of learning.

6.3 Collaboration

A situated learning environment supports the collaborative construction of knowledge. Collaboration demands interaction, exchange of ideas and engages thinking and reflection, which in the end creates understanding and meaning. Social interaction is crucial in a situated learning environment. 'Situated means not just people's thoughts and actions being located in space and time. Thought and action are social, because they involve other people.' (Lave and Wenger, 1991, p.32).

6.4 Reflection

A situated learning environment promotes reflection to enable abstraction and self-determination. Reflection serves to analyse and evaluate the personal situation and circumstances, in order to make sense of the personal situation and in order to create meaning and understanding. The learner is 'forced' to focus on their thought process and to reflect upon it. Reflection is a very important attribute of the environment as it represents an opportunity to articulate, negotiate and defend certain issues, positions and knowledge.

6.5 Support and encouragement

A situated learning environment provides a safety net for the learners or participants of the LCP. The learner's situation needs to be acknowledged, perhaps assessed or identified in the beginning of the programme in order to offer suitable, effective and specific support. The support that is going to be offered is dependent on each individual's personal needs and must allow a wide range of possible assistance. Support and encouragement are offered in several ways: informal, which will lead the learner in the right direction, but also in pointing out strategies and suggestions.

6.6 Authentic context

A situated learning environment provides an 'authentic' context that reflects the situation of the learner. This understanding of environment is not restricted to the world-, work-, or life environment, but also to situations, beliefs, and values. The 'authentic' context represents the full complexity of the situation without fragmentation; it is all embracing. The examples also reflect good practice in their acknowledgement of the importance of an 'authentic' context, in accordance with Brown et al. (1989) who - in proposing their model of situated learning - argued that meaningful learning will only take place if it is embedded in the social and physical context within which it will be used. By taking into account and acknowledging the social and physical context of the learner and building further action on it, the notion

and obligation of 'authenticity' is achieved and performed in the examples. The great advantage of this approach is that the learning environment does not have to be artificially constructed to employ principles and elements of a 'situated learning' approach, but instead it is already present and in use in the LCP. The LCP, when operating ideally, embraces the context and sets free a learning environment. At the same time, space is being created and thus provides an opportunity for active engagement of all participants.

7. ADJUSTMENT OF THE CONTEXTS AS A PRE-REQUISITION FOR AN 'ENGAGEMENT' OF THE LEARNER IN THE LEARNING PROCESS

With regard to the target group of the 'Re-Enter' project and the presented examples it might be reasonable to understand 'learning communities centred on practice' as opportunities for engagement as a first step. The first step here would be to invite and allow learners to 'engage' in the community. Becoming engaged is a major step the young people have to undertake in order to become active participants in the learning process. So far there are a lot of unmentioned factors that influence the conditions and pre-requisites for full and total 'engagement' in the learning process. The context of the learner and the context of the LCP have to be *brought in line or adjusted* (see Figure 4) as each of them possesses their own understanding of their own context. This adjustment will lead to full participation and engagement in the LCP.

Many unknown and hidden factors will influence the learner's attitude towards learning community centred on practice. The LCP seems to be something new, unknown and not experienced so far for the learner. This situation might affect the learner's position and attitude towards the LCP and towards their readiness to participate. Individual learners might position themselves as observers at the 'edge' or periphery of the LCP or they might position themselves closer to the centre, already fully participating. Here Lave and Wenger's argument about moving from the periphery towards the centre of the 'community of practice', or from being a newcomer to becoming an old-timer does seem to be an over-simplification in this context.

For the LCP to become a facilitator of situated learning, its task would be to facilitate the conditions within itself. It has to facilitate learning as an experience of the complexity and ambiguity of mastering 'authentic' tasks.
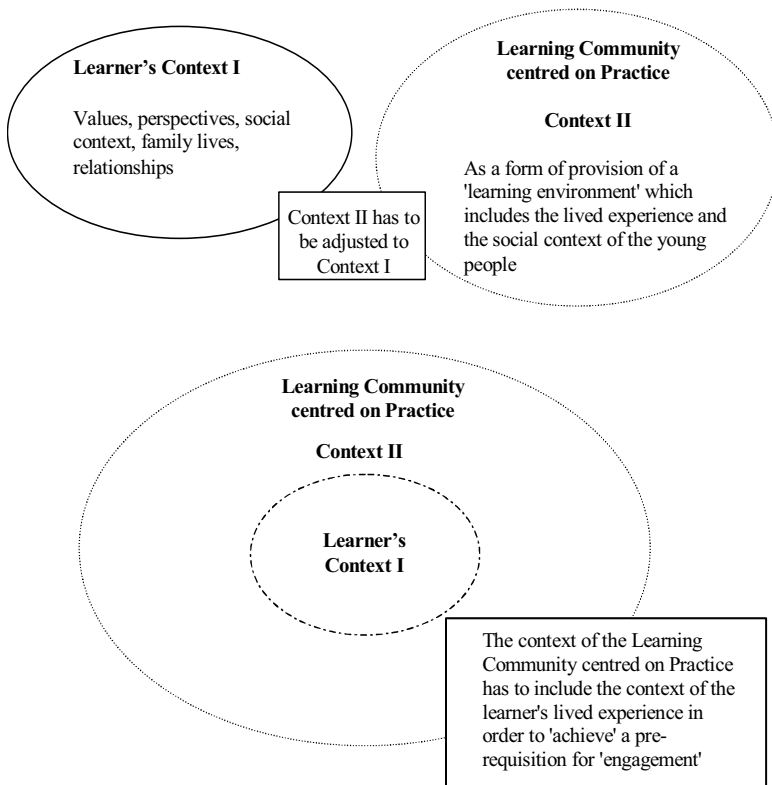
Figure 4. *Adjustment of the contexts.*

8. THE DIFFERENT MEANING AND RECOGNITION OF SKILLS AND COMPETENCIES

In this context the words 'skills' and 'competences' gain a different and new meaning. Skills and competences are seen not only as instrumental, but include wider personal and social competencies as well. They are recognised as being part of the individual, shaped and developed through the individuals' experience and biography. These are competences that are needed to understand and deal with one's own situation, personality, expectations, difficulties, boundaries, limitations and rejection. A lot of the young people on the programmes had previously negative experiences of education and training and were held responsible for their 'failures' in the past. Many of them experienced personal problems which need to be resolved before training for the world of work or even career orientations can be realised. Therefore for them being on a training programme cannot be interpreted as preparation for work or transition into the world of work. They need an opportunity to gain wider personal

and social as well as instrumental competences in order to develop an individual capacity to try out, make decisions, reflect on their experience and create meaning of their situation. The emphasis is on enabling young people to realise their potential. Concepts like confidence, motivation, identity, worth/purpose, self-actualisation, potential and empowerment are included in the process of developing competences and 'moving people on'. The underlying agenda is to discover, foster and develop young people's capabilities.

In the end this might and will lead to progression ('moving on') either into education and training or into the labour market. But the most important underlying factor is that the young person keeps positively constructing his/her personality and identity.

9. THE IMPORTANCE OF SITUATED LEARNING AND THE LCP AS AN OPPORTUNITY FOR ENGAGEMENT.

The young people are situated in a multi-layered and multi-faceted world and engage with it in differentiated and diverse ways. They already have multiple engagements with people and environments in different aspects of their lives. The situated learning approach recognises this and offers an opportunity for social participation and social learning, (thus engagement) and an opportunity for sense-making and developing a view of the world (thus raising *awareness*).
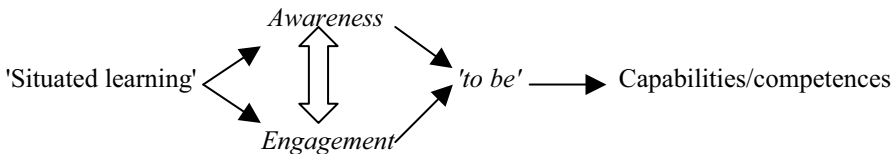
Engagement and awareness influence each other. To be engaged and an active part of the community raises awareness about one's own situation and possibilities. Engagement and awareness determine the feeling of being and belonging (see Figure 5) Engagement and awareness lead to understanding and the development of capabilities. (Engagement is wider than commitment, raises awareness and enhances the full range of capabilities).

The ideal LCP acts as a supportive, enabling (learning) environment and creates an opportunity to develop strong relationships within the learning community centred on practice. This relationship goes beyond the normal work-life relationship as the participants of the community of practice get to know each other on a deeper level and basis; thus again creating engagement and awareness and trust. Trust, engagement and awareness build the foundation for the development of competences.

Keeping a vision
Motivation
Worth, purpose
Meaning
Values, beliefs

'to be'
Awareness
⇕
Engagement

Confidence
Empowerment
Identity
Creativity
Potential
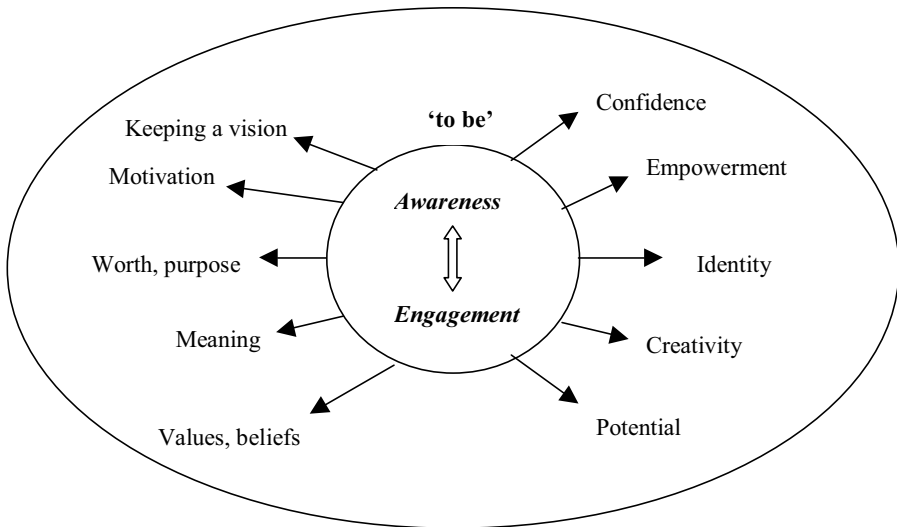
Figure 5. Embracing concept of 'competences'.

Learning and 'moving on' is not always dependent on the experience and knowledge of the trainers and professionals. Both parties, young people and the professionals, might have clear ideas and models about the way the process is going to head. But the ideas might not match. Therefore the young people might need more freedom to be involved and exercise some degree of influence over processes they are involved. The process of moving on should result from communication and a collaborative thinking and action process, rather than according to the structures and practices advocated by professionals.

Within the LCP the responsibility for the moving on of the individual lies within the whole 'learning community centred on practice'. The state of responsibility might change within the process, at some stage the young person has to take over the responsibility and at other stages the community or the trainer is responsible for the action. The main concern is that it is a shared responsibility where no person is inherently more important than another. It is therefore also important to focus on how young adults are making sense of their experiences (Evans and Furlong, 1997) and to understand their motives, expectations and visions in their life. These dimensions are included in the responsibilities of the LCP.

9.1 The 'examples of good practice' offer a starting point

We have to emphasise that the examples of 'good practice' mean 'good'. They are not intended show 'best practice'. The examples were chosen to demonstrate a different approach in contrast to and to education and training. This is a way that takes into account commonly found training provisions for young disengaged

people. They showed how an LCP can adopt a more holistic approach to the young person the broader context of the young person, in a way that encompasses social and biographical as well as instrumental competencies. Young people are integrated and included in the 'learning community centred on practice'. The LCP approaches and views them as individuals who can offer and provide knowledge and potential to the community. It also views them as capable and equal individuals. The LCP offers a space where the opportunity exists to address personal problems, (re)gain confidence and to find understanding, meaning and identity.

10. SUMMARY OF THE FEATURES OF 'SITUATED LEARNING' FOUND IN THE EXAMPLES OF 'GOOD PRACTICE':

- Focus on the individual as part of a LCP.

- Engagement in a 'community of practice' through 'authentic' participation and social interaction.

- Focus on the learning process, 'moving on', not on the outcome.

- Instead of competence-based qualifications, the aim is to 'move the participant on', getting them back into a learning attitude.

- Provision of a learning environment that allows the learner to become 'engaged' in a LCP.

- Provision of a learning environment where the learner can explore, act, analyse, think, propose and reflect.

- Emphasis on reflection – engagement in dialogue with others, and negotiating meaning within a (specified) context.

- Knowing and doing not separated.

- Pre-existing ideas, experience and knowledge of the learner are recognised.

- Learning environment that responds to different needs.

- Opportunity to try something, and to try something else as well. Work tasters + work experience.

- No time (limit) constraints.

- Learner/ learning process supported through guidance, mentoring, support, advice.

- The goal of all examples is to enable young people to construct their own meaning and understanding of their situation and to relate to their context.

The model is, in some senses, an ideal one. It has been developed from a theoretical base. It has expanded and elaborated the concepts of communities of practice and situated forms of learning with reference to the 're-entry problem'. While it has used concrete examples, none of these adheres fully to the ideal model but all have contributed to elaboration of its features. The model represents a departure from the individualised and deficit led approaches which have come to characterise mainstream UK practices. It has emphasised mutual and collaborative learning, and the notions of being and becoming. This contrasts with the mainstream emphasis on compensating for individual lacks and deficits, recognising that these are often structurally produced. It emphasises the need to intervene in the sometimes hostile material environments which young people inhabit and which can stretch them beyond their individual capacities to cope unaided. It also requires that competition between schools, colleges should be replaced through with a real commitment to co-operation and partnership, working towards a transfer and exchange of learning/teaching experience and towards the concept of "communities of practice". Here it would be essential that the partners should include central government, employers and their representative organisations, employees and their representative organisations (the trade unions), local authorities and career services, colleges and voluntary bodies. Among these LCPs and partnerships, commitment and clear lines of responsibility are essential.

The prospects for implementation of the model are context related. Major barriers include the intensification of work in modern workplaces, which run counter to the need for space for learning and reflection in real-life environments. The second major barrier arises from constraints on the actors, both practitioners and the participants themselves. Both policy environments and institutional environments create significant barriers. Both of these environments are, however, shown to have contradictory features and assumptions in relation to the 're-entry problem'. There is pressure for resolution of some of these contradictory features, particularly where they continue to espouse predominantly individual solutions to structurally produced problems. Social inclusion is a relational process, involving dynamic interrelationships between individuals, communities and the wider society. Principles of mutuality and collectivity (rather than individual competition to gain a tenuous foothold) are consistent with the process of social inclusion. A greater emphasis on learning and support provided as a public responsibility and a collective 'good' would provide a more promising environment for advancement of these alternative models.

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BEATRIX NIEMEYER

SITUATED LEARNING FOR SOCIAL AND VOCATIONAL INTEGRATION IN GERMANY

1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter summarises the German contribution to the European survey and analysis of the 'Re-Enter problem' and responses to it. The first section will give an introduction to the study field: programmes preparing young people for vocational education and training, including the framework conditions and the features of the people they are intended to serve. The second will examine the educational practice of these programmes from two different angles. Firstly it will be shown how the educational approach is affected by the fact that the programmes are situated in the overlapping sphere of social and vocational education, with the educational staff representing three different professions, social workers, vocational teachers and trainers. Secondly the educational practice of programmes will be examined with respect to the underlying mainstream theory of action oriented learning in vocational education and training. The specific concept of situated learning, which has been developed by the European partnership in a process of mutual learning will, in the third section, be introduced as a new perspective on learning processes, especially if compared to the more Germanic concept of action orientation. Both approaches show a wide range of similarities on the first sight. The implications of the situated learning approach however can be understood as a change in perspective, valuing social competences and stressing the social context of learning.

Conclusions will be drawn regarding a change of the perspective on learning, of researchers and of practitioners. Recommendations for the implementation of the approach of situated learning in practice will be given and desiderata for further research are pointed out.

2. THE RE-ENTER PROBLEM IN GERMANY

2.1 The apprenticeship market situation

As a reaction to shortcomings of the labour market and deficiencies in compulsory schooling a whole variety of supporting programmes has spread out in Germany since the late seventies, aiming to improve the transition into the labour market for young people. Thus a parallel VET system has developed under the responsibility of

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state and federal labour office, partly with preparatory programmes, supporting career orientation and offering special training, partly replacing the "real" vocational training by offering complete apprenticeship programmes by special training institutions. These programmes – referred to as Re-Enter programmes in this context – have been funded since 1980 by the labour office and other public institutions. During this period numerous programmes have been launched, developed and improved to address the growing and changing target groups and to prevent them from dropping out of school, of training and of the social network in general. Unfortunately programmes are very heterogeneous and it is difficult to gain an overview. According to their self-image they want to serve as a bridge into the labour market, but all too often they function simply as a waiting room, with a bridge to the next program in the best case.

The effort to reduce youth unemployment in Germany by public means has been considerable: figures went down by 17% in 2000, whereas in the same period the number of training places on offer did increase only by 3% (Bundesjugendring, 12/2000). Still there are constantly 10% of school leavers without a school leaving certificate each year, who will not find a work or training place without additional support. The number of those who drop out during the 3 year period of an apprenticeship is officially recorded at 22%. The number of those who require additional support to complete their apprenticeship has increased considerably (Berufsbildungsbericht, 2000). We have become used to the idea that a constant group of young persons faces the risk of losing the competition for the scarce training places or jobs. Regardless of the reasons why, they have difficulties with learning and therefore difficulties to keep in step with the expected progress towards a career.

At the same time a successfully completed apprenticeship is going to be the most important entrance ticket into the labour market. The federal ministry of education and research just released a study about young persons not holding a recognised vocational qualification. In 1998 there were 1,330,000 persons between 20 and 29 years not holding a recognised vocational qualification. 65.5% of them did not have a school-leaving-certificate from lower secondary school.[1]

3. THE RE-ENTER TARGET GROUP

In a very formal way the scope of our review of Re-Enter programmes in Germany covers all participants in any kind of schemes designed to prepare trainability and employability in general. This group is a heterogeneous one. The majority are young people without a school leaving certificate (or with a very poor one). Many of them have difficulties with the German language and are seen as having deficits in

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1 Only 15.3% have been on a preparatory programme. 64.1% never started vocational training, 37.8% never even applied for it, 14% had no success looking for one. 35.9% dropped out from an apprenticeship, after the first year. In the group of those who did not even apply for an apprenticeship 48.5% had to care for children. (Source: Bundesministerium für Bildung und Forschung, Presseerklärung 'http://www.bmbf.de/deutsch/veroeff/presse/pm99/pm080599.htm', 16.8.99)

socialisation or other difficulties resulting from social disadvantages. Recently three tendencies are being observed: the number of young persons regarded as "disabled" has grown – a challenge for special pedagogy; and the number of young persons who cannot find a place for an apprenticeship although they hold a school leaving certificate has risen, due to the shortage of such training places in the labour market. So market conditions have become a source for disadvantages, too, especially in the eastern part of Germany. Thirdly the number of those who need support to complete an apprenticeship is growing. Additional help with learning or coping with difficult social conditions is needed.

The German discourse refers to the target group as disadvantaged young. This term is ambiguous from the perspective of the young people: on the one hand it allows them to enter special support programmes, on the other hand it will be a stigma and make it difficult to find a place in the regular VET system or on the first labour market in future (DJI 1999, 10). The reasons why young persons become *disadvantaged* however are not sufficiently considered. The reasons lie in the specific combination of individual attributes and structures and requirements of the educational system, the VET system and the labour market.

4. RE-ENTER PROGRAMMES

A special subsystem of vocational education and training has been established in Germany to combat exclusion, disadvantages and discrimination by social processes. This might be less important in terms of overall figures, but it has become a regular step in the career path of young persons who show problems with learning, training, achievement or their social circumstances (Rützel and Biermann, 1999, p. 31). Since the mid seventies additional aid to VET forms a special field of education and training with a broad range of activities and a great variety of institutions offering these measures, reaching from the churches, unions, to private enterprises and various welfare organisations. The programmes in existence are offered either as additional school programmes or, funded by the labour offices, organised by specialised training organisations.

A recent evaluation report by the German Youth Institute (DJI) has grouped the majority of programmes according to their main target groups as follows (DJI, 1999, p. 14-19):

a. the numerous programmes of vocational schools, in- and off-company-training with a duration of not more than one year, aiming to prepare young persons for an apprenticeship or an occupation, which can altogether be subsumed by the terminus "Berufsvorbereitung", i. e. vocational preparatory programmes;

b. programmes and schemes aiming to enlarge the number of training places offered in the dual system in general and to allow disadvantaged young persons to take part in on-the-job-training programmes and regular apprenticeships. These are special state funded or subsidised in-company-training schemes and "abH", i. e. apprenticeship accompanying helps;

    c.   training and apprenticeships for those young persons who have not found a place on the regular apprenticeship market or who have started a dual system apprenticeship but then dropped out. These apprenticeships are offered by special training centres (BüE).

All these programmes have a remedial function for the shortcomings of the labour market and the ability of the social system to integrate the target groups. They are situated in a field of tension between social policy, labour market policy and educational policy and are subject to regulations of varying intentions. At present it is difficult to gain an overview of the numerous support programmes on offer aiming to ease school to VET transition, not only by the young persons, for whom they are designed but for many practitioners, too. They often lack sufficient co-ordination. This leads to a waste of money as well as preventing a systematic development of qualifications and abilities of the participants.

Furthermore programmes are under critique with respect to the socially shared responsibility for vocational education and training. There is the danger that this responsibility might pass over to the state completely, with the economy rejecting its own traditional tasks in the dual system and taking the chance to reduce costs. Another problem of preparatory programmes was that they too obviously served as a waiting period on the way to "real" VET and helped to reduce youth unemployment figures. Apart from the school-leaving certificate eventually obtained, no other qualifications would be certified. Additionally there is a considerable reluctance to acknowledge tacit or other extra-vocational skills and to value the potential of informal learning.

For the selection of good practice examples and the evaluation of Re-Enter practice with respect to situated learning the programmes offered by specialised providers outside schools have been of importance. Evaluating examples of good practice in this field that have been collected by the DJI German Youth Institute or the BIBB Federal Institute for Vocational Education and by the Re-Enter research team the German Re-Enter system appears to be one of the most effective and innovative in Europe. Good practice focuses on the individual development and the enhancement of biographical and vocational competences. Recently programmes have to work according to quality standards established by the labour office and have to give evidence, how they are suitable for special target groups or individual young persons. The current measures for quality assurance and the advertising practice of the German Federal Labour Office has led to a constant advancement of innovative new projects and to a broad variety in methods at a high quality level. In general curricula are aiming to build on the competences and potential of young persons instead of focusing on deficits. They aim, in general,

- to adopt a holistic approach
- to promote teamwork
- to develop and carry through individually tailored Re-Enter programmes which are oriented towards the needs and experiences of the target groups

- to interlock theory and practice.[2]

In addition market oriented support structures aim to enhance the application of action oriented learning. The idea is that providers of Re-Enter programmes have to serve their "client", the labour office, which values the respective educational concepts. The general discourse has shifted from the methodological approach to a more substantial level of individual social integration. These programmes are creative in the organisation of the courses they offer and in the selection of their methods and show themselves to have a high measure of competence in handling this specific clientele. Yet a Re-Enter specific didactic, linking the broad experiences of practice to a pedagogical theory which integrates social and vocational learning, still has to be formulated.

5. RE-ENTER PROGRAMMES AS A PEDAGOGICAL CHALLENGE

5.1 Conditions of educational approaches to the Re-Enter target group

The educational biographies of "disadvantaged" young people are usually shaped by social difficulties. In vocational preparation programmes therefore, an important socialising task exists quite apart from the task of a purely vocational qualification. Here not only vocational skills shall be imparted, the promotion of social competence and personality building activities are of just as great importance. While "normal" vocational education and training particularly aim at the achievement of occupation-specific and technical qualifications, Re-Enter programmes must go above and beyond technical qualifications, to offer as broad a vocational orientation as possible, and particularly in the sense of a holistic education, enable young people to successfully take up, continue with and complete a vocational training.

> Participants of programmes usually need a supply of potentials for accomplishment, which should cover instrumental, communicative and biographical competences. "Only the dimension of instrumental competence allows itself to be established through conventional vocational qualifications, it includes what is understood traditionally as an extension of vocational qualifications. Communicative competence on the other hand, aims at creating the ability to act communicatively and ethically. Biographical competence describes the ability to orient oneself with regard to the course of ones own life; it is acquired through participation in social systems, which transcend themselves, in that new developments become clear, accessible, and potentially controllable, which perhaps also point up at the same time new occupational opportunities or foreshadow and open up careers."   (Eckert 1999, 25; translation BN)

Towards this aim three different professions act together in German Re-Enter programmes: trainers, teachers and social workers. In theory and practice the process of transition from school to vocational education and training in Germany is

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[2] The decree # 42/96 by the German Federal Labour Office lays down these criteria for re-entry programmes as being obligatory. The decree thereby sets out, in its intention, new yardsticks for the Re-Enter programmes.

situated in relation to different if not competing spheres of influence. A theory of learning or a didactical approach, which could be able to integrate all three perspectives concerned, is still to be elaborated. Re-Enter programmes at present reflect actual methods of social and youth work with its typical tendency towards individualisation of support structures on the one hand; on the other they reflect the current mainstream of vocational education and training as it is presented by the broad concept of action oriented learning.

These concepts have been developed to improve learning at vocational schools. It has to be asked how the related theoretical and methodological approaches to training and learning apply for the area of Re-Enter programmes and their target groups. Theories of vocational education and training are based on the idea of a combined process of learning and training at school and at the workplace. This is not true for many participants in Re-Enter programmes – either because they have not got a regular training place in a company or because they systematically withdraw from schooling.

Traditionally Re-Enter programmes are structured and organised in ways which closely relate to the dual system, with the vocational school and school certificates playing a crucial, if not problematic role. But there are the following major differences to be acknowledged:

1. Re-Enter programmes address another target group, which is differing from "normal" apprentices in terms of socialisation, knowledge and career orientation.
2. Re-Enter curricula are different. Learning in Re-Enter programmes aims at the preparation for an "normal" apprenticeship, it is not a substitute for it. Basic skills and personal development (Aufarbeitung sozialisatorischer Defizite) and career orientation are the aims of learning, which are related to social rather than to vocational skills, including the ability to manage ones own biography (biographische Lebensbewältigung).
3. Re-Enter programmes offer different learning contexts. They are facing the difficulty of obtaining a balance between an authentic and meaningful workcontext and providing the time and space necessary for learning and reflecting.
4. Re-Enter programmes face the challenge of allowing for participation and social engagement of slow learners and low achievers.

Initially, when Re-Enter programmes first came into practice in 1980, the contribution of social work was designed as an addition to laboratory training and school learning. It was meant to serve as a mediator between the expectations of employers at the workplace and the abilities of the participants at the programmes. This function has changed, social pedagogy has become an integral part of programmes' design in general. Based on the fact that most of the participants' disadvantages are rooted in social circumstances today teachers, trainers and social workers should jointly design programmes, mutually develop support plans and closely collaborate during the everyday practice. Teachers and trainers are expected to integrate methods of social work into their didactical designs. Social pedagogy is

no longer regarded as being additional but is intended to be an integral part of programmes. Besides adjusting the different expectations of employers and young persons the personal biographical development has become one of the first aims of the programmes – due to the fact that work placement cannot always be achieved and young persons realistically should also be well prepared to live through periods of unemployment.

In the field of Re-Enter-Programmes three different professions meet to work together towards the common aim to enable young persons to start and carry through an apprenticeship. Nevertheless social workers, vocational teachers and trainers do not form a common profession, their self images and definitions are rooted in different contexts. Their methodologies refer to theories from different sources, their didactical approaches are linked to different limitations and they often work at different locations. Moreover they are employed on different contracts, earn different money, have different access to further training to prepare for their specific target groups and bring in different expertise. They all have been trained at different institutions and toward varying educational targets.

In their everyday practice difficulties and tensions arise from this. While the teacher might think it necessary to push a young person to pass the next examination, the social worker might highlight the varying speed of personal development and would rather be patient and wait with his or her interventions. The teacher is dependent on fixed schedules and determined locations, the social worker practice is not limited in this way and can be situated much closer to young person's world. Both are working with social norms, but the teacher's aims are put down in a curriculum, while the social workers curriculum remains rather hidden.
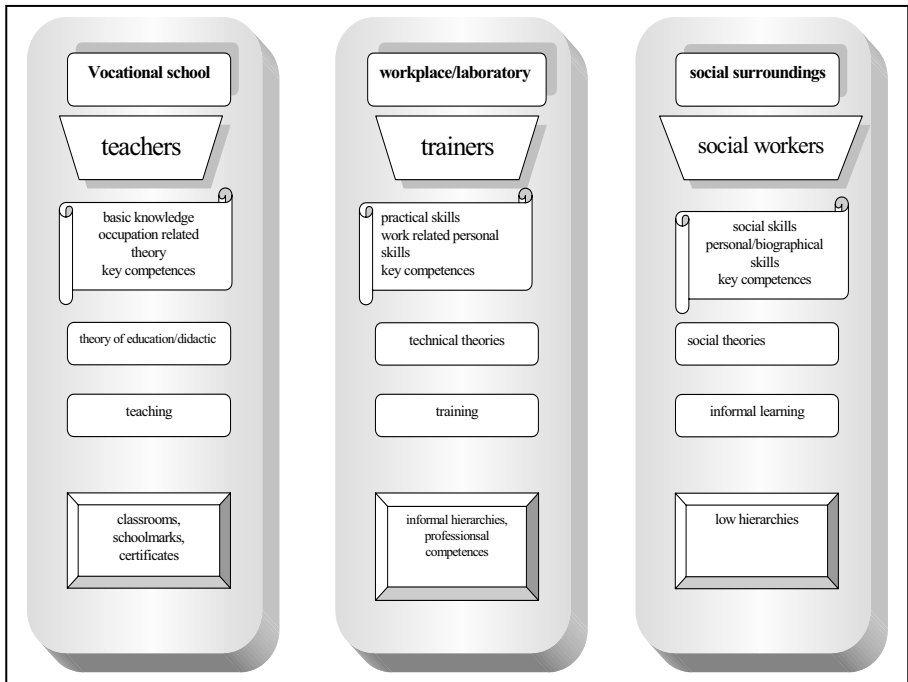
Their three spheres differ with respect to

- the learning environment they use and produce
- the staff, its level of training and the respective working and employment conditions
- the content and aims of learning processes
- the means of teaching, learning, organising or incentivising learning
- the theories they refer to
- the power relations and hierarchy systems of relevance
- the systems and instruments by which they construct and maintain their professional identity, values and beliefs
- knowledge about the target group
- methodological approaches

Furthermore this type of labour division illustrates a basic tension, which is significant for these types of programmes in general (cf. Enggruber, 2000, p. 5ff.). Firstly there is a basic tension between the expectations of the labour market - usually serving as argument for vocational teachers and trainers to develop their demands-, and the idea of developing biographical perspectives and personal empowerment of the young persons – usually being the aim of social workers.

On the one hand young persons should receive individual, tailor made support; on the other hand social norms are imposed. From the perspective of the professional acting teachers and trainers these norms are expressed through the existence of school leaving or vocational examinations and certificates, which function as a means of social selection. The normative action of social workers is not as obvious, their approach can be a caring or parenting one.

On the one hand the schedule of curricula makes it necessary for teachers to stick to certain rhythms and periodical examinations, on the other hand the idea of personal growth presupposes time and patience to gradually let the young persons develop their abilities according to their own pace.

The 'empowerment' of young people often features as an aim. Yet empowerment presupposes a dialogical structure of relations between young persons and educational staff. In practice however a hierarchy in knowledge and power works against it. Social workers as well as teachers or trainers often assume to "know better" what is good for the young persons and are in a position where they can impose their decisions without asking the young.

Between the three different professions concerned with Re-Enter programmes expertise is not systematically shared, mutual learning does not happen on the level of the educational staff, therefore holistic support for the young persons is difficult to arrange. On a theoretical level this extends to the question about the relationship of social pedagogics to vocational pedagogics. To what extent can their findings and methodological knowledge be transferred from one to the other or used by both? From a general perspective social pedagogy is considered to be expert for its methodology while vocational education rather adopts the theoretical approach, including the development of the related learning theories. While the "normal" vocational education and training more or less systematically excludes the idea of additional social support apart from personality development by the growth of a vocational identity, the perspective of situated learning combines both approaches in a holistic way. Identity growth in an LCP combines both social and personal competences as well as vocational skills.

From a professional perspective the approach of situated learning could enforce a closer co-operation of social workers, vocational trainers and teachers, with the integration of all three in common professional Re-Enter practice as an aim to think about. The central features of situated learning can be compared to the features of action oriented learning, more commonly used in German contexts.

6. ACTION ORIENTED LEARNING AND/OR SITUATED LEARNING

A comparison of action oriented learning and situated learning suffers from the fact that there is no narrow definition. Neither action oriented learning nor situated learning can be defined as an exact term, but rather signify a general approach to thinking about learning, including a related set of methods referring to constructivist theories of learning in general. Action oriented learning has been developed in the German speaking context, situated learning is explained by English speaking researchers. Still both should not be treated as the exact translation of the same

thing. Differences can be identified, since both concepts have emerged from different historical and cultural backgrounds.

The theory of action oriented learning has substantially determined the German discourses about vocational education and training. The term can stand for the aim of developing the ability to act (*Handlungsfähigkeit*) through a special concept of apprenticeship, as well as for a theory which focuses on the social dimension of learning situations. Furthermore the term can be applied to a method of deciding on educational aims and contents, or methods which organise learning situations (Czycholl and Ebner, 1995). *Action-oriented learning* is regarded as a scientifically based principle for the organisation of learning processes. The ability to act both physically and mentally is the main didactic aim, the action itself gains in importance compared to abstract argumentation. The ability to act can only be learned by acting. *Action-oriented learning* includes the basic idea of connecting head, heart and hand (Pestalozzi) within learning processes and the enhancement of learning through work projects, which is as old as educational theory. Since the pedagogical discourse of the 1970's, the term *Handlung* (action) has gained new importance in educational theory. Its meaning has been broadened by cognitive-structuralistic explanations and materialistic action theories. Behaviourist teaching theories, teacher centred instructions or the four level model which includes the instruction order of demonstrating, copying, correcting and training consequently were criticised. The ability to work in a team, to judge and make appropriate decisions, to take on responsibility or to show creativity have become central aims of vocational education instead. These aims demanded for new didactic models and *action-oriented learning* has become the quasi official method of vocational education (Rauner, 1995).

Action-oriented learning is a pedagogical concept which has been developed against the background of institutionalised learning environments. It is based on a strong relationship between learning and school, although the change of school and teaching practice is its particular target. *Action-oriented learning* aims to promote learning processes through activity. Learning can be defined as the aim, work can be understood as the means. In contrast situated learning regards learning as one aspect of inter-individual interaction in general.

Action oriented learning aims at the formation of vocational action competences, which include social, personal, methodical and learning competences, which altogether add up to the ability to carry out a certain profession. The results of a process of situated learning however are not exclusively linked to a certain profession and they are not limited to separated or distinguishable bundles of competences, but represent a rather holistic and personality oriented approach.

7. THE MAIN FEATURES OF SITUATED LEARNING

Situated learning is not opposed to action oriented learning. As a social theory of learning it does include the action oriented approach. Situated learning opens the perspective in view of the social circumstances and conditions of learning. The

central spheres of a learning process are meaning, identity, community and practice. Thus learning is seen as an interactive process from the perspective of the learner.

> The Re-Enter partnership has established as central features of situated learning:
> ⇒ A specific *approach* to learning, viewing learning as a social process of interaction situated in a *community of social practice*
> ⇒ A *set of methods* situating learning in an meaningful context
> ⇒ A *process* aiming for *full participation* of the learner
>
> (cf. Bettina Hoffmann)

The major difference between both concepts lies in the degree to which they refer to constructivist learning theories. While action oriented learning stresses the importance of action for the learning of the individual, situated learning highlights the social embeddedness of learning. Considering learning as the process of (re-)construction of meaning by the learner, according to action oriented learning this process would be an individual one, while situated learning would see it as a social one and argues that meaning can only be constructed in relation to and in interaction with the social context in which it is situated. Socialisation and learning thus overlap.

Consequently situated learning focuses on the conditions of learning, stressing its social dimensions. Action oriented learning concentrates on the arrangement of the process of knowledge transfer. Situated learning promotes experience, action oriented learning sees knowledge as basic for competences. Nota bene: the differences in practice can be only gradual ones.

While action oriented learning is concerned to create learning environments, situated learning cares about the social structures which allow legitimate participation (Lave and Wenger, 1991) of a novice in a community of practice. Growth in competence is considered as a holistic process, which is enhanced by acquiring the ruling cultural practices of this group. According to action oriented learning competences are gained through accumulation of knowledge and the individual ability to transfer it to new situations. The concept of *action-oriented learning* asks: How does learning take place, how is knowledge accumulated and qualifications developed, conserved and utilised? It is concerned with the improvement of a (classroom) learning situation in order to optimise the effects of learning: "How can teaching be improved?"

The situated learning concept asks: In which ways do novices have access to the knowledge of a community of practice, how is collective knowledge transmitted and what status is conferred on a novice. In the concept of situated learning biographical and social competences form an integral part of personality, competences are not seen as isolated parts of it, hence cannot be developed separately.

8. LEARNING COMMUNITIES CENTRED ON PRACTICE

Crucial for operationalising the concept of situated learning in work-related programmes designed explicitly for the purpose of learning is the learning community centred on practice, which forms the social body of the learning context.

A review of the social dimensions of learning highlights the outstanding importance of the LCP and leads to better recognition of the social framework(s) of learning. Identity growth in a learning community centred on practice combines both social and personal competences as well as vocational skills. The learning community centred on practice involves not only working teams but members with different individual bodies of competence. The development of the individuals as well as of the group arises from the heterogeneous structure of the LCP and the specific conflict solving strategies within the group. Learning is understood as participation as well as competence development. The young person's status as a learning individual is accepted by other members. More experienced members are ready to allow access and to open themselves to newcomers in order to make learning possible.

The concept of situated learning in learning communities centred on practice helps to change the perspective on social learning in Re-Enter programmes. An LCP forms the learning context for persons at the stage of transition. Situated learning in LCPs is not exclusively limited to the community of learners but is also shaped by the processes of interaction within the community of the educational staff and in the institutional context. Furthermore learning communities centred on practice can be identified on the institutional and on the structural level as well. Learners and trainers can be regarded as a learning community centred on practice; the staff working on a programme; teachers, trainers and social workers, form a learning community centred on practice, too. They engage in a common process of sharing competence, experience and expertise. Situated learning then is not limited to the organisation of learning situations and the processes of skills formation and vocational qualification but likewise relates to the structures of the institution in which it takes place, and the readiness to learn of its employees and co-workers. Their opportunities for participation in the decision structures retro-act on their motivation to work. The opportunities (or limits to the same) which an institution offers for a flexible and open organisation of learning practice, are substantial conditions for learning.

Finally the persons representing the institutions and concerned with the planning, funding, researching, of Re-Enter programmes form their own learning communities centred on practice. Well situated learning should aim to link all these levels together and be ready to continuously develop, re-new and re-adapt the social body of competence to the development processes of its members.

8.1 Changing the perspective

The concept of situated learning opens up the view of the Re-Enter target group and the possibilities of rearranging educational approaches and didactical concepts from a process and learner orientated perspective. This can be illustrated by applying the features of an LCP to the German Re-Enter practice.

One of the basic principles of situated learning is the accessibility of the learning community centred on practice. By participating in an LCP learners share its stories

and strategies, have access to the implicit and explicit knowledge and to the related cultural practice.

Within a group of learners different levels of knowledge, different abilities and different learning speeds are to be co-ordinated, which constantly challenges instructors and trainers. Handling different learning potentials in heterogeneous learning groups can be analysed in various ways. The group can be seen as a learning resource, where people learn from each other, and as a corrective in the sense of social check, where people mutually judge and evaluate their work. From this perspective the group is a source of learning. It is formed by learners, its members meet because they have a common aim, which is to achieve certain vocational capabilities and qualifications. The purpose of group work is learning.

The approach of situated learning extends this perspective. The group can be considered as a social body of competences, i.e. as a learning community centred on practice. Its members join in a purposeful and meaningful common activity. The individual work experiences and expertise contribute to a common product, which need not necessarily be materialised. For example, this concept applies for a song group, too. Competences, including physical skills, are developed by contributing to the specific work task. The focus of the groups' engagement is this commonly shared product or aim, giving meaning to their common action. The process of learning rather appears as a by-product. Team work is a "natural" process.

Neither the novice nor the expert have a static position with regard to knowledge and rank within the learning community centred on practice, both are developing in co-operating and exchanging experiences with each other. The expert offering his/her expertise to the community goes through a learning process, too. All members of the learning community centred on practice are engaged in a learning process. The development of the individuals as well as of the group arises from the heterogeneous structure of the learning community centred on practice and the conflicts within the group. This is the social frame of the learning process and of outstanding importance. It is because learning is considered as a social process, that different forms of knowledge, open questions and time and space for learning are necessary. Only in relation to others it will be possible to experience new meaning and solutions for problems. This is true for learning in relation to work as well as for personal development.

This concept of a group as an LCP has three presuppositions:

a) the aim is commonly shared and all members of the group will identify with it – which is more likely to be achieved for a work task or a material product than a school test;
b) the common expertise is able to achieve this aim – which is easier to be arranged outside of a classroom;
c) structures confirming hierarchy and competition do not work against this common aim.

Conventional practice often stands against this approach: examination performances must be made by the individual, success in learning has to be proved individually. Individual sponsorship plans, modularity of supporting measures and

flexible operational sequences strengthen the clear tendency towards an individualising of the learning processes. The concept of an LCP, in contrast, acknowledges the educational function of group connections. Both for motivation and for the technical and social learning process, the group is thus of great importance. Learning communities centred on practice are an indispensable condition of situated learning.

9. CONCLUSIONS

The concept of situated learning in learning communities centred on practice opens the perspective for the development of a specific didactical approach for Re-Enter programmes. LCPs, when operating ideally:

1. integrate social and vocational learning by taking an holistic view of the learners personality and potential
2. allow the learners to grow an identity and discover realities beyond vocation and occupation, including nonconformist biographical perspectives
3. offer the necessary social space where participation can be lived and perceived as competence, by avoiding excluding structures and mechanisms and labelling approaches
4. allow for a mutual development of expertise of all professionals concerned, by valuing the broad methods and experience of Re-Enter practitioners and enhancing processes of sharing professional competences
5. contribute to the establishment of a set of methodologies and the development of related theories.

Of course this would imply a re-thinking of the Re-Enter problem not only by researchers and practitioners in the field, but would effect also funding and legislation, i. e. the level of policy making. Only a joint effort will help to progress towards the aim of assuring the right to participate in these terms to the social community on all social levels.

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SITUATED LEARNING EMBEDDED IN THE IDEA OF ROUTE COUNSELLING

1. INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter has presented a comprehensive insight into the concept of situated learning. This concept views learning as a 'lived experience of participation in the world'; people learn where they are engaged in a learning context which is meaningful for them. Work related learning is not separated from the working environment, but is embedded within it.

The young people of our target group do not by themselves, know the way to satisfying working and learning environments. A structure is required to guide them. The concept of 'Route Counselling' presents a suitable structure. In Belgium, since 1995, Route Counselling is considered as a general approach to integrate young people at risk of social exclusion into the labour market. We also consider this concept appropriate for our target group, since it is a method of 'intensive and individual counselling of the unemployed in a route towards regular employment through different phases' (Struyven, 1995).

Section 1 gives an introduction to the concept of 'Route Counselling'. We discuss the origin of this concept, then we adapt this concept to disengaged young people, expanding the theory of situated learning and Learning Communities Centred on Practice (LCPs). In section 2, we assemble both of the concepts in a framework for the assessment of Re-entry measures. In sections 3 and 4 we present two Flemish good practices and fit these practices within our framework. The last section provides our conclusions and recommendations.

2. ROUTE COUNSELLING

2.1 The origin of this concept

Route Counselling is an approach that was originally developed to reintegrate the so-called 'hard core' of the unemployed. Disabled persons, ethnic minorities and people without recent work experience were disproportionately represented in the groups defined in this way. The members of these target groups all need intensive and individual guidance, and supportive measures to reintegrate in the labour

market. Route Counselling is client-oriented, and has an individualised, tailor-made approach.

In Flanders the concept of Route Counselling was first developed by some non-governmental organisations in the late eighties. Later it was elaborated and adopted by governmental agencies. From this bottom-up approach Route Counselling emerged officially as a political option in the Labour Protocol published in 1993.[1] Since 1995, Route Counselling has been a central concept in the European Social Fund (ESF) programme for Belgium. The leading principle of Route Counselling, as is defined in the ESF approach, has methodological as well as structural dimensions (Struyven, 1995, pp.58-68). The concept of Route Counselling is a dual concept: (A) is the methodology to integrate unemployed people in the labour market and (B) provides the basis to fine-tune and integrate the activities of different organisations.

(A)   *The general approach to integrate unemployed people into the labour market* (methodological approach).

Different activities are stipulated in a route to reach the intended goal: outreach and access, intake and diagnosis, preliminary route, labour market route, job-finding, placement and after-care.
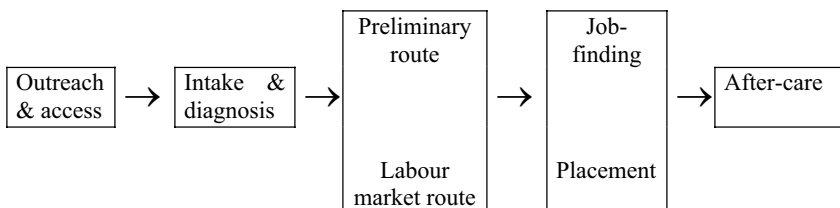
Figure 1. Phases of Route Counselling. Douterlungne et al., 1997, p. 60-61.

The outreach & access-phase includes recruitment, guidance and registration via a network of guides who are in contact with the correct target group. The actual route for the customer has not yet started.

The phase of intake & diagnosis can be regarded as a critical phase in a route: this phase determines how a route to (paid) work will progress. The first phase results in the preparation of a route plan, which is geared towards finding a particular job.

The preliminary route includes those activities which are not yet geared towards the labour market, but which appear necessary as a condition for the labour market. Examples of activities along the preliminary route include referral to assistance, activation and motivation, non-vocational education.

The labour market route includes not only vocational education or vocational training, but also training in job applications, rehabilitation and work experience. Work experience is extremely important in this phase.

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[1] VESOC (Vlaams Economisch Sociaal Overlegcomité), Protocol met betrekking tot de werkgelegenheidsconferentie, Brussel, 17 maart 1993.

During the job-finding phase, the organisation makes contact with the business community or other employers with the aim of finding a paid job for the customer. For the customer, this is the phase of looking for a job, of application.

Placement relates to the conclusion of a contract and is usually the direct consequence of job-finding in the previous phase of the route. The job-finding process, therefore largely determines the types of work and contract, working conditions, etc. No matter how good a route may be, it is a measure of nothing if it does not lead to work. A good route offers a smooth transition from work placement or work experience to work.

After-care relates to counselling in the workplace of the employee and/or employer. Many customers successfully found jobs, but then drop out ,soon after starting work. Many dropouts can be prevented by allowing counselling to continue for six months.

The length of the route and the activities it embraces are determined by the requirements of the unemployed and the demands of the labour market.

The scale on which Route Counselling should be executed is the local level. Target group-oriented services are mostly set up with a labour intensive and small-scale approach based on local partnership (par. 1.1).

(B)   *The basis to fine-tune and integrate the activities of different services and/of organisations* (structural approach).

An essential assumption in the method of Route Counselling is that co-operation between different actors in the area of employment and vocational training is necessary to provide the services needed for the target group. It is very unlikely that every organisation is able to organise vocational training, job mediation and placement and counselling. Therefore, the method of Route Counselling must be fit in an *organisational model of partnership*. There is no limit in partnership, as long as the different partners are useful to the target group. The surplus value of this partnership is important. Further, the co-operation must be stated in *a protocol* in order to avoid problems of competence and responsibility during the year (Struyven, 1995, p. 60).

The overall management and co-ordination of Route Counselling measures is undertaken at the *regional and national level*.

2.2 Elaboration of the concept of 'Route Counselling' for disengaged young people

Our target group consists of disengaged young people, who often face a combination of problems (problems of motivation, behavioural problems, drug or alcohol dependence, for example). The combination of their social background and little education strongly limits their chances in the labour market. We consider the approach of Route Counselling to be very suitable in helping young people break out of a negative spiral.

Young people affected by these problems need intensive and individual guidance, and supportive measures to re-enter into education and the labour market. The field of education cannot possibly manage this task by itself. The response to

these social problems needs an integrated and co-ordinated approach at the local, regional and national level.

2.3 Route Counselling as pathway to integration (methodological)

In Route Counselling an integral route is developed to provide the necessary individual and intensive guidance for the individual youngsters.

A route should be seen as 'a logical succession of phases'. Route Counselling can assume many different shapes and sizes in practice. There are two adaptations to each target group. First a route is composed, then adjusted to the characteristics of the target group (Our target group concerns disengaged youngsters, and we have chosen routes with features of the concept of 'Situated Learning'.). Then, the target group-oriented route is attuned to the specific needs of each individual member of the target group.

The figure below shows the distinctive phases of Route Counselling:

| 1. Outreach and Access | 2. Intake & Diagnosis | 3. The learning environment: *Learning and working in a meaningful environment* | 4. After-care |
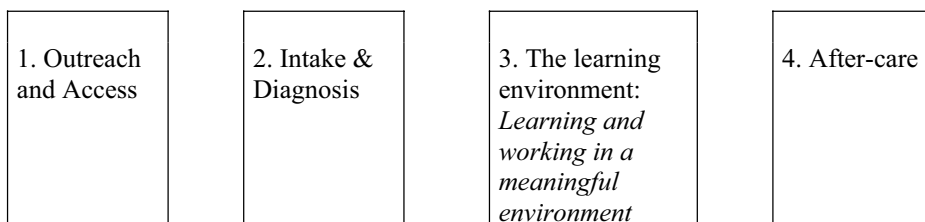
Figure 2. Phases of Route Counselling.

This succession of phases is based on the concept of Route Counselling, as described in section 1. The content of phases 1, 2 and 4 is also based on this concept. The content of phase 3 operationalises aspects of the theory of 'Situated Learning'. This framework thus links the two concepts. The four phases are elaborated in the next section.

At the level of the individual, the *route-counsellor* operates to shape these phases. Route Counselling involves the provision of intensive guidance and support to an individual youngster along an individually negotiated route toward employment and social reintegration. In line with this definition, the function of route counsellor is not to provide the individual elements along the route but rather to work out the route based on the needs and circumstances of the disengaged youngster taking into account the young person has multiple membership of different communities (Wenger, 1999). From that point on, the counsellor will monitor their progress and provide mentoring support where difficulties arise. They negotiate on their client's behalf with other relevant actors along subsequent parts of the route such as social services, training providers and employers. And they offer after-care when the young person has reached the end of his or her route.

2.4 Institutional and organisational aspects (structural)

The method of Route Counselling has to be embedded within a workable structure. Route Counselling can only work if a network of facilities and organisations join forces to assemble the different phases in the route. This partnership is defined as the structural component of Route Counselling. The method of Route Counselling must be fitted in an organisational model of partnership; local and regional collaboration, co-ordination and financial arrangements, legislation are all part of the framework.

These aspects are elaborated in section 5, 'Conclusions and recommendations'.

3. A FRAMEWORK FOR THE ASSESSMENT OF RE-ENTRY MEASURES

This section provides an overview of our framework for the assessment of Re-entry measures. The interpretation concerning the content of phase 1, 2 and 4 is based on the concept of 'Route Counselling', the interpretation of phase 3 on the concept of 'Situated Learning'.

The proposed assessment framework can be used to assess re-entering programmes. A programme need not take all our criteria into account in order to be a good programme. The important thing is that the young person is guided and supported intensively along an individually negotiated route, by which he or she can participate in a work situation which has meaning for them.

PHASE 1:	Outreach and Access
Accessibility *Advice and information*	One of the key objectives of route counselling has been to address the various barriers (personal and otherwise) that particular target groups face in accessing existing services. This first phase requires measures to actively recruit clients through various forms of outreach services or locate entry. Services can increase their accessibility for the target group by: - making oneself known to the target group - physical accessibility; place of business, opening hours… - cultural accessibility; atmosphere of the building, mentality of the contact persons - advice and information on what the process will involve to clarify potential client's expectations and their role and responsibilities within the route counselling process. + - advice and information on existing employment and training opportunities and other services to filter out those youngsters who do not need more intensive route counselling

PHASE 2:	Intake and diagnosis
2A. **Assessment of individual data** *A minimum level of well-being*[2]	Level of well-being of the young person; check whether the minimal requirements are met in terms of: - physical needs; residence, personal budget, eating and drinking patterns, addictions?,… - need for affection; social support system, relational problems with significant other persons?, … - need for clarity and stability; pace of life,… - need for appreciation; how does the young person evaluate himself, his good and his less good characteristics?, … - need to give meaning to life; how does the young person value his own life? If the young person is totally absorbed in his or her own problems and has insufficient energy left to participate appropriately in the programme, then he or she must first be given the chance to come to terms with these problems.
PRESENT	- The current living situation (socio-economic background, family situation, leisure, …) must be examined, and the implementation of the programme must be geared to it (e.g. childcare, specially adapted working hours, attuning the programme culturally and in terms of content with the young person's own concerns and activities, …)
PAST	- Map out the young person's past; what was he/she doing up until now (leisure, school, work)? What did it mean to the young person?, with special attention being given to the trajectory in traditional education and the inhibiting factors related to it, as well as to any trajectories offered by other programmes
FUTURE	- Discuss the future with the young person; expectations? ambitions? interests? opportunities? limitations? Let the young person try out work situations in order to get an idea of the opportunities.
2B **Exploration of Route options**	- Based on the detailed individual assessment, this stage involves investigating various feasible route options for the client. This will include identifying possible job opportunities, associated skill requirements and from this, necessary training and pre-training options, entry requirements for these programmes and so on.

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[2] Based on Laevers F. (1992)

2C **Design and** **agreement of** **Route elements** **and timing**	- Working with the client in agreeing a route that meets their particular needs and requirements. It is vital that the client has the central role in determining the final route and that it is not imposed upon them. This process of agreement should allow for a very explicit and transparent contract, including key milestones for each stage of the route, agreed success criteria and so on. Such a contract offers the youngster a perspective and serves also as a guideline for monitoring the young person.

PHASE 3: Learning and working in a meaningful environment

A meaningful learning context	Learning within a **meaningful work context**: - the things the young person learns and has to perform must be linked to a certain work context with which he or she can identify him/herself - the young person learns while he or she interacts and collaborates with other young people and counsellors relating to the things learned; the things he/she learns are immediately transformed into meaningful action - attention is given to the whole person; his/her experiences in the course of learning (cognitive, emotional, somatic and relational) - the experienced collaborators act as whole persons; they allow themselves to be known as persons, with their own emotions, possibilities and limitations - the context is complex and rich, and reflects the multiple uses to which their knowledge will be put in the future
Space for the young person as a learner	Within the work context, there must be space for the youngster as a learner: - the young person is given specially adapted tasks for the purpose of learning, (e.g. less complex tasks, tasks involving less risks, low costs if he/she commits an error, and with less time pressure); these must always be tasks, however, that have meaning within the work context. - the tasks are sequenced to reflect the changing demands of learning, - and certainly not the job demands. - the young person receives special guidance when performing his/her meaningful tasks - the young person is recognised as a learning employee; the employer must have an open attitude to the members of the target group, and give them a chance; a mistake must be viewed as an integral part of the learning process and not as a failure on the part of the young person. - the experienced employees must also be open to the views of the young people and be willing to learn from them

The learning content of the working context	By creating this 'space', access is given to the learning content of the work context. This learning content comprises three domains: - the means which are used in the work context; theoretical knowledge, techniques, skills, tools, … - the manners in the work context; who is who?, how does one address different people?, how can you work together well… - insight into the work being done; understanding what the work context stands for and being able to act accordingly; knowing what behaviour is appropriate and what is not; being able to assume responsibility Not only does one have to acquire sufficient meaningful knowledge of these three domains, but one also has to know how to deal with them in a creative manner and make one's own contribution.
Intermediate evaluations	Throughout the learning process emotions, learning needs, ambitions, expectations and experiences of meaning will change; there is a need for intermediate evaluations and a flexible way of dealing with these changes.
Beyond the own position in the working context	**Look beyond your own position within the work context:** - make the young person realise what the labour market is like and what his/her place is in it; - teach the young person how to reflect critically upon his/her position in the labour market; - do not let the young person just accept his/her position; rather, let him/her try out new things, explore new opportunities Together with the young people, regular assessments must take place of where they have come from and where they can go; the young people must have a clear understanding of what they are doing and why.
Beyond the working context	Be able to experience one's own contribution to the work context as meaningful action within society + transfer to other meaningful actions within society (both within and outside the labour market): - The work context must have meaningful consequences for the outside world, so that the young person learns what is needed to act effectively in society - being able to experience one's own role in the work process as meaningful for a broader context - The young people must learn what it takes to participate successfully in our society; basic skills (reading, writing, arithmetic), learning how to learn, social and communicative skills, being active citizens who can participate both constructively and with a critical mind in society, health-enhancing behaviour and environmental friendliness.

PHASE 4: After-care	
This phase is of crucial importance for the long-term effects	- There will be a final evaluation, and the young people will be given assistance in the transition to a new educational or work situation. It's very important that the youngster arrives at a job/training that is just right for him/her. - In order to safeguard long-term benefits, it would be best to continue mentoring the youngster during his/her new placement for at least six months

4. A GOOD PRACTICE EXAMPLE:

4.1 INSTANT A: the first social supply agency in Flanders

The idea for this project grew from the view that a great number of people have 'excluded themselves' from the labour market. There are people who cannot be served by the regular labour market or by the alternative employment services (apprenticeships and work experience projects). This is usually attributed to motivation, education, problems with adjustment, physical or mental condition or a combination of reasons.

The starting point was that the way the young are reintroduced should take into account their patterns of thought, expectations and living, to reduce the risk of further frustrations and withdrawal.[3] It was held that this group considers 'working' as a means of survival, rather than as a planned and career-orientated vision of the future. Therefore, for this target group, there is a constant need for short-term work assignments. Instant A, a socially aware supply agency, addresses itself to the people of this target group who are between 18 and 30 year old. The agency are to guide these persons and to enable them to re-enter the labour market by way of short-term work assignments.

Instant A applies a *low threshold*. The project is located in an area with a relatively high concentration of the target group, situated very near to a youth centre. The setting is hence not really threatening, it is close to the young people's living environment, and it cuts across other aspects of their life. Furthermore, the atmosphere in the Instant A office is described as a 'cosy chaos' or 'free and easy', and very inviting. The employment factor is consequently less frightening. All disadvantaged and unskilled young people are welcomed in. No particular former knowledge or experience is required. However, they are expected to stick to a few clear agreements, like arriving on time, and renouncing aggression and violence at their workplace. Some young people come to Instant A of their own accord; this is made easier by the office's central location. Other young people are referred to Instant A by certain welfare organisations or social workers.

The core of this project should be viewed as an *intensive 'step-by-step guidance'*; Instant A acts as an intermediary to *guide young people to work*, and the project

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[3] From: Instant A., concept note, p.2.

pays a lot of attention to giving *social guidance*. They have a transparent contractual system for the target group. In this respect, much emphasis is placed on the advantage of a very transparent administration (e.g., with simple registration forms). Furthermore, care should be taken regarding the language used, and the fact that some youngsters do not have a bank account or a fixed address. The project also looks after the youngster's total welfare, with his/her own particular social background and specific expectations, interests, etc. When special problems occur which are related to the social context of the person, Instant A will not hesitate to refer the youngster to the appropriate agencies. After one period of employment at Instant A, young people can be re-employed many times over. A central aim is to provide work experience in as many areas as possible.

Instant A is an original co-operative project between a private initiative (Vedior Interim) and a government initiative (VDAB/T-interim) in the employment sector, combined with a rural service for young people (Jeugd en Stad). Precisely because various organisations are involved (employment, youth and social sectors), this project seems to have a high level of credibility, effectively reaching the target group. The interim agencies bring special know-how regarding employment, and 'Jeugd en Stad' has a wealth of experience in working with young people as a target group. At Instant A, the various partners are actually represented by *a counsellor* (Jeugd en Stad) and *two career advisers* (Vedior Interim and VDAB/T-Interim). The project is financed with public money (The town of Antwerp) and with private finances (VEDIOR and VDAB/T-interim). In order to optimise its operation, Instant A *wants to bring about an interaction between its own initiative and a network of other services, organisations and agencies;*

- Instant A mobilise the *organisations that come into direct contact with the target group*; they are the ones that can provide the intake for Instant A. Within these contact organisations, checks are made as to how Instant A can be integrated into the guidance and advice given by these organisations.
- Instant A mobilises *employers*. They aim the continuous enlargement of a group of employers who can provide temporary work for unskilled young people. In the first phase, the organisers are contacting companies and social organisations that already have a record of employing the target group. In future, they hope to attract new potential employers, and to make them aware of the fact that much unskilled work is being carried out all too often by highly qualified staff. They consequently hope to raise employers' awareness, touching on the problem of the unskilled being ousted. Many employers have vacancies for short-time jobs that stay open because the search for employees costs more time and money than the period of employment.

Instant A wants to encourage co-operation between organisations to avoid overlaps and duplication, and to maximise resources, personnel and output by uniting forces. Instant A does not provide any specific schooling or training since the project does not wish to duplicate facilities already in existence.

4.2 The way Instant A operates

When a young person arrives at Instant A, an assessment and intake interview takes place. In the interview, questions like the following are asked: 'Who are you?'; 'How did you end up here?'; 'Have you been referred by a particular agency?' 'What is your current situation?' (social background, work experience so far, interests, expectations, etc.). At the same time, the adviser will set out the wide range of job opportunities available, and what Instant A has to offer.

If the youngster is prepared to accept the offer, Instant A will start looking for a short-term work placement immediately after the first interview. These work placements are intended to motivate the young people to work, teach them appropriate work attitudes, make them familiar again with a daily routine and work rhythm, make them realise the importance of 'work experience', give young people a feeling of self-worth and re-engage them in the community. These objectives can only be achieved if the work assignment matches as far as possible with the interests and expectations of the young person. For the advisers of Instant A, that will be the most important criterion when they are looking for an appropriate job. After all, if they do not manage to match the expectations and interests of the young person, there is an increased risk that the young person will become even more frustrated and disengaged. When a suitable job has been found, Instant A takes great care to keep track of the young person, and to give guidance. For instance, the organisation 'checks if the young person has actually turned up at the work place. When this has not happened, one of the advisers will get in touch with them, to look for explanations and to help find solutions.

After one work placement, the young person can be re-employed several times through Instant A, for more short-term assignments. If after a period of time the person becomes interested in longer work assignments, transfers can be made either to another job agency to be considered for longer-term vacancies, or to the ordinary labour market.

4.3 The functioning of Instant A

The functioning of Instant A, situated in the framework, is given in Appendix 1. The practice of Instant A is a good illustration of the methodology of Route Counselling. This instance encourages co-operation between organisations to avoid overlaps and duplication. Instant A does not provide any specific schooling or training since the project does not wish to duplicate facilities already in existence.

Other projects are needed, who in association with Instant A, can develop a valuable 'situated' set of learning experiences. We think of projects that offer a meaningful learning context, like the project of VELO that will be discussed in the next paragraph.

5. A SECOND 'GOOD PRACTICE' EXAMPLE:

5.1 VELO: safe and ecologically aware cycling in Leuven

With its strongly developed service sector, the town of Leuven has few job opportunities for unskilled workers. There is an acute shortage of jobs for young part-time students. Based on the need for worthwhile employment for the target group, the training managers of the ACW[4] unions consequently decided to set up a small company where young people could gain work experience in circumstances resembling those of normal working life. They devised a project with particular relevance to the town of Leuven: repairing and renting out bicycles. The project 'VELO' was born.

VELO aims at young people of school-age (15 till 18 year) who are in part-time education, who have the least chance of finding regular work, and who cannot be helped to find employment through ordinary career services. These youths are seen as lacking the pre-requisite attitudes to enter the labour market and to establish themselves in the production process.

VELO is a co-operative project between the ACW-union, town of Leuven and the Catholic University of Leuven. The ACW, as a workers' movement, has been pre-occupied with problems issues surrounding part-time learning and part-time work. The town of Leuven has emphasised the aspects transport, traffic safety and theft prevention. The town could ensure a steady supply of bicycle wrecks, since the police tend to pick up a large number of found and dumped bicycles. The University of Leuven and its students have a great demand for bicycles. The bicycles form part of the services the university offers its students. The most important objective is to create social employment. Additional goals are to offer social services by renting out bikes and repairing bikes for students and social organisations, and to raise awareness about the prevention of bike theft, safe cycling and environmentally-friendly transport. VELO is recognised by the ESF, and it receives grants subject to meeting the conditions of throughput (i.e. a minimum of one third of the students should move on to another form of part-time education or into regular employment). Additional subsidies are received from the town of Leuven, the university, the regional fund of the metal industry and a few other grant sources.

VELO is a bridge project. These projects are set up for a particular target group who finds it hard to integrate into company environments and practices. These are young people who would not benefit from the usual career guidance services. Their attitudes to work means they cannot hold a job down for very long in the production process. Through these projects, the youngsters are offered *practical training* under supervision (for 9 months, 20 hours a week), on top of the *theoretical training* in the centres of part-time education. In this case study, the practical training is provided

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[4] The ACW is the umbrella of the Christian Workers' organisations. It works together with all its sections an a social movement which is acutely aware of the problems of our times and which can respond to these issues at a local and regional as well as national level. The ACW provides access to the political decision-making process. Within this context the ACW tries to achieve a wide political effect through its organisations, agents and representatives in all kinds of consultative bodies, advisory councils and committees.

by VELO. The bridge projects form some sort of link or bridge to a regular job or apprenticeship.

In this small company, young people are gaining work experience in working conditions which closely resemble those in the normal work place (clocking in, sticking to break times, working on an economic product, being confronted with the actual end market, customer contact). The most important advantage of situated learning in this context is that the youngsters get to know the real work environment with its built-in expectations, they can gain work experience, learn the necessary attitudes to work, and increase their chances of regular employment. A further positive effect of this project arises from the fact that, because of its location, university students often call on VELO's bicycle technicians for help, which may stimulate the feeling of self-worth of the part-time trainees. VELO works with three centres for part-time education: Het Treffen and Redingenhof, both in Leuven, and the Damiaan-Institute in Aarschot. VELO reserves spaces on its courses for youths from 'Het Treffen', an educational centre for the young people who can no longer be accommodated elsewhere, who have often already had brushes with the law, and who are not unfamiliar with the world of drugs and crime. The career advisers of these three centres of part-time education propose a number of young people who are deemed eligible for this form of training and employment. The youngsters are consequently invited by VELO for an interview.

Young people would only be prevented from joining if the project leaders judged that they would have a very bad influence on the group dynamics. In the first instance, during the recruitment interview, the youngster is not expected to disclose his or her past in great depth. The young people are meant to feel that they can start the employment and educational training with a clean slate. Only if events take place which the project leaders cannot get a grip on, they will try to find causal factors in the pupil's social environment. The leaders will take these factors into account in their search for a solution to the problem.

The methodology of VELO consists of *intensive mentoring of the individual youth*, depending on their capabilities, attitude and motivation. An individual learning plan is drawn up for each youngster in co-operation with all parties concerned (VELO, centre of part-time education, career guidance centre). The mentoring covers both the technical side and the student's state of mind. The *technical mentoring* includes learning basic metal- and cycle techniques from the technical instructors. The learning plan for teaching these technical skills comprises various phases which become increasingly more difficult: disassembling old bikes, construction of bikes by recovering parts, repair of bikes, and receiving bike from customer - diagnose the problem - make an analysis - propose a solution. These stages of the learning plan may be motivating, because achieving a higher level (e.g., customer contact) is associated with higher status within the group. The *psychological and social mentoring* covers work on social skills and attitudes to work through training, regular appraisals, group activities, career guidance, etc. It is mostly the responsibility of the individual tutors. The two types of supervision are not strictly separated, though: by teaching cycling techniques, they try to work around the area of attitudes to work and social skills. After 9 months employment in

the bridge project, VELO needs to find external[5] paths of transfer for the young people: either in another form of alternating learning and working if the youngster is still of school-age (i.e. younger than 18), or in an ordinary work environment if the youngster is no longer of school-age. If no external path of transfer can be found for the youngster, a serious problem arises. It is essential for this target group that the work experience and the work rhythm is maintained, to prevent them from losing the newly acquired attitudes to work and hence relapse into the old patterns. Such a break would also make it harder to motivate them for work a second time round.

VELO accompanies young people who complete the project on their first steps into the labour market. It is important to check what the actual requirements are, to make a realistic evaluation of the youngster's potential, and to establish whether or not they would qualify for the vacancy. For that reason, much attention is paid within VELO to discussions around the central theme: 'Who are you?'; 'What are you able to?'; 'What do you want?'. The project tries to give the young people a more realistic self-image, and to explore their expectations and areas of interest. Youngsters from that target group are often unaware of what they know, are capable of, or what they want.

6. THE FUNCTIONING OF VELO

The functioning of VELO, situated in the framework, is given in appendix 2.

The practice of VELO displays strengths and weaknesses. The strength is that VELO can offer work experience in circumstances resembling those of normal working life. Moreover, these circumstances are adjusted to the needs of our target group: the tasks are sequenced to reflect changing demands of learning, and not the job demands and one provides intensive guidance. But, there also are some weaknesses. First of all, VELO cannot award recognised certificates or diplomas. VELO gives the young person proof of participation in the project. They can present this to employers to demonstrate their work experience. Secondly VELO offers only one option: 'repairing and renting out bikes'. A number of pupils are not at all interested in the bike-business. So, it is very hard to motivate them. VELO, as a separated measure, isn't a flexible answer to the needs and interests of the individual youngsters of our target group. Thirdly it is hard to find an appropriate continuation of their 9 months employment (either another form of alternating learning and working of a regular work environment).   A link between a work placement initiative like VELO and a social employment agency like Instant A would be ideal. After all, they deal with the same target group: those youngsters who do not view a job from the long-term or career perspective, and who tend to go for short-term employment.

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[5] Internal transfers are only possible in a limited number of cases. However, VELO feel they are essential to maintain the continuity of service in the company.

7. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Confronted with the hard core of disengaged youngsters, who often have a combination of problems (drug or alcohol dependence, brushes with the law, membership of an ethnic minority, family problems, etc), one has to bear in mind that traditional training initiatives (there are limits to the capacity of young people for this kind of training) and employment measures are not always a solution. The answer lies in a comprehensive approach tackling the full range of problems of the risk-groups.

An ideal approach, for instance, is a combination of the concepts 'Situated Learning' and 'Route Counselling'. Applied to a practical setting, 'Situated Learning' offers an environment where the learning process is embedded in the context of work; a purposeful work environment attuned to the characteristics of the youngsters in the target group. 'Route Counselling', made operational, offers the structure and intensive personal mentoring required by youngsters in the target group to gain maximum benefit from the work environment provided. This approach can be broken down into four significant steps (see: the framework for the assessment of Re-entry measures)

7.1 Outreach and Access

It is important to map out the number and distinctive aspects of youngsters in the target group; possibly through a meticulous registration system and by research into the profile of the target group. This knowledge is required in order to adapt the number, location and image of the organisations that want to reach out to these youngsters to the volume of the target group, its culture, and its perception of the organisations involved. The physical and cultural threshold should be as low as possible. The organisation should subsequently select the youngsters that actually qualify for the methodology proposed in this chapter. For this purpose it is necessary to have sufficient skills and information. At the point of recruitment, the youngsters should be adequately informed of this particular way of working as well as of other training options.

7.2 Intake and Diagnosis

In co-operation with the young person, an individual training programme is drawn up. It is important to involve the youngster at this stage, to avoid the impression of coercion. The length and nature of the actual tasks within the programme are tailored to individual characteristics, but they are also determined by the range of activities on offer. A sufficiently large and varied range of meaningful work experience placements are required in order to best match the individual nature of youngsters in the target group. The contents of these work experience placements should vary in order to raise the interest of individual youngsters, and the expectations/requirements should vary in order to maximise each individual's potential.

7.3 Learning and working in a meaningful environment

The work experience placement on offer should embody the 'situated learning' concept: it should offer learning community centred on practice. As stated before, the actual number of work experience placements on offer determine the extent to which an optimal match can be made between the potential, interests and needs of individual youngsters and the demands/expectations, the job content and the guidance given by the work experience placement.

7.4 After-care

It is important that a decent end-of-placement evaluation is carried out. Ideally, an actual certificate or degree should be handed to the youngster in order to validate the knowledge and skills achieved. After all, this sort of certificate or degree increases the transparency of the training in work experience placements, both for the youngster and the employer. Subsequently, a suitable follow-on placement should be found. At this stage, too, it matters that the offer of placements should be sufficiently broad and varied. In order to safeguard long-term benefits, it would be best to continue mentoring the youngster during his or her new placement.

At the level of the individual, it is the role of the route-counsellor to help shape these phases. He/she will accompany and motivate the youngsters in the target group throughout the four phases; the counsellor recruits and screens the youngster, drafts an appropriate route, supports the youngster throughout the different phases, negotiates the youngster's interests/needs with various authorities, and offers after-care. Helping disengaged young people to re-enter society is hence a shared objective. One authority or organisation cannot achieve it alone. The education system, for instance, cannot possibly manage the task by itself, because the youngster's problems extend beyond the situation at school. At local level, it is important that relevant partners should adopt structural co-operative links. Relevant partners are authorities that offer part-time theoretical tuition, organisations that offer meaningful on-the-job training, organisations that are closely involved with youngsters in the target group, certain research centres, etc. There is no limit in partnership, as long as the different partners are useful to the target group. The

surplus value of this partnership is important. Partners should be vigilant to avoid duplication as well as gaps within the partnership links.

Furthermore, the co-operation should be formalised in a protocol in order to avoid problems of competence and responsibility. When the roles and responsibilities are not clearly laid down, the partners will come to blows. After all, enthusiasm and goodwill alone are not sufficient.

Local partnership links should be managed and co-ordinated at regional and national level, and legislation should be relevant and transparent. The tasks should be formulated at three levels (practical implementation, management/co-ordination and policy-making) and it should be decided what level tasks are best dealt with. It is very important that all required tasks should be carried out effectively, and that the respective roles of the relevant parties are clearly visible and distinct within the partnership framework. The following principles should underlie the structure: equality between partners, sufficient autonomy of the co-ordinating body, a co-ordinator who gains the trust of all partners and who has a clear mandate which nonetheless includes sufficient room for negotiation.

Experience of partnership links formed to tackle the hard core of unemployment (Struyven, 1995) has taught us a few lessons that are also relevant for building partnership links dealing with our target group. Firstly, experience shows that simple networks have a greater chance of success. Organisations often have to get used to one another and mutual trust must grow. Secondly, those initiatives conceived on the 'shop floor' have the best chances of success. Knowledge and skill at implementation level lead to practical initiatives and provide a better foundation for co-operation than when imposed from above. Thirdly, that everything does not have to be achieved at once. It is better to achieve something small now that can be improved on later, than to stifle well-meaning intentions with excessive projects.

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APPENDIX 1:	THE CASE OF INSTANT A
PHASE 1:	**Outreach and access**
Accessibility	Some young people are referred to Instant A by social services (Instant A co-operates closely with these services). Others come to Instant A on their on account.
	Low threshold
	This project is located in an area with a relatively high concentration of the target group, situated very near to a youth centre. The setting is hence close to the young people's living environment, and it cuts across other aspects of their life. Furthermore the atmosphere in the Instant A-office is described as a 'cosy chaos' or 'free and easy', and 'very inviting'.
Advice and information	There is an **adviser** who set out the wide range of job opportunities available and explains what Instant A has to offer; "short-time jobs that aren't as intimidating as longer employment periods".
PHASE 2:	**Intake and diagnosis**
2A. Assessment of individual needs *a minimum level of well-being*	They are expected to stick to a few clear statements, like arriving on time, and renouncing aggression and violence at their workplace
PRESENT	There is an **intake interview**, questions like the following are asked: - what is your current situation? (social background, work experience so far, …)
PAST	- who are you? - how did you end up here?
FUTURE	- what are your interests, expectations, …? The work assignment matches as far as possible with the interests and expectations of the young people. For the advisers of Instant A, that will be the most important criterion when they are looking for an appropriate job
2B Exploration of Route options	Instant A explains which short-time jobs are available.

2C **Design and agreement of Route elements and timing**	If the youngster is prepared to accept the offer, Instant A will start looking for a **short-time job** immediately after the first interview. They search for jobs that **match as far as possible with the interests and expectations of the young person**.
PHASE 3: Learning and working in a meaningful environment	
A meaningful learning context	- offering the young people work experience in temporary jobs (maximum 4 weeks in the same place); the youngsters can be re-employed several times A central aim is **to provide work experience in as many areas as possible.**
Space for the young person as a learner	The youngsters are employed in works in short-time assignments. They need special guidance to be able to function in these jobs. Instant A has two career advisors and a counsellor who put in a great effort to make this jobs valuable/constructive for each youngster: They provide **guidance to employment**; - the instance has a very transparent administration taking into consideration that some youngsters do not have a bank account or a fixed address; - the instance checks if the youngster has actually turned up at the work place (when this hasn't happened they will get in touch with the youngster to look for explanations and to find solutions). - And they provide **social guidance** looking after the youngster's total welfare, with his/her particular social background and specific expectations, interests, … When special problems occur which are related to the social context of the person, Instant A will refer the youngster to the appropriate agencies.
The learning content of the working context	- Work attitudes: daily routine, work rhythm, contact with colleagues, …
Intermediate evaluations	Instant A takes great care to keep track of the young person, and to give guidance
Beyond the own position in the working context	If after a period of time the youngster becomes interested in longer work assignments, he/she can be transferred either to another job agency and be considered for longer-term vacancies, or to the ordinary labour market.
Beyond the working context	

PHASE 4: After-care	
After-care	After one period of employment at Instant A, young people can be re-employed many times over until they have been put on their way into the regular labour market.

APPENDIX 2: THE CASE OF VELO	
PHASE 1:	**Outreach and access**
Accessibility *Advice and information*	VELO works with three centres for part-time education; their career advisers propose a number of young people who are deemed eligible for this form of training. The youngsters are consequently invited by VELO for an interview.
PHASE 2:	**Intake and diagnosis**
2A. Assessment of individual needs *A minimum level of well-being*	Youngsters would only be prevented from joining if they are expected to have a very bad influence on the group dynamics.
PRESENT	In the first instance, the youngster is not expected to disclose his of her past and current situation in great depth. The young people are meant to feel that they can start the employment and educational training with a clean slate. Only if events take place,
PAST	which the project leaders cannot get a grip on, they will try to find causal factors in the pupil's social environment. The leaders will take these factors into account in their search for a solution to the problem.
FUTURE	Youngsters from that target group are often **unaware** of what they know, are capable of or what they want.
2B Exploration of Route options	
2C Design and agreement of Route elements and timing	The youngsters must declare themselves willing to co-operate with their mentors and with the other pupils, and to discuss difficulties instead of immediately giving up

PHASE 3: Learning and working in a meaningful environment	
A meaningful learning context	The project wants to offer worthwhile work experience and training to disengaged young people, anticipating that it will enable them to move on to the regular labour market. - VELO: a small company that offers work-experience in **circumstances closely resembling those of normal working conditions** (clocking in, sticking to break times, working on an economic product, being confronted with the actual end market, customer contact). - Theoretical training: in the centres of part-time education - Practical training: provided by VELO (for 9 months, 20 hours a week)
Space for the young person as a learner	VELO offers **intensive mentoring of the individual youths**, depending on their capabilities, attitude and motivation. An individual learning plan is drawn up for each youngster - Technical mentoring: learning basic metal- and cycle techniques from the technical instructors; achieving a higher technical level is associated with higher status within the group - Psychological and social mentoring: this covers work on social skills and attitudes to work through training, regular appraisals, group activities, career guidance, …
The learning content of the working context	The job of renting and repairing bikes: technical knowledge, work-attitudes and social skills.
Intermediate evaluations	The intensive mentoring of each youngster implies ongoing evaluations and adjustments.
Beyond the own position in the working context	Recruitment training must prepare them to look for a regular job. VELO **analyses vacancies together with the youngsters**, explores what the actual requirements are on the labour market, and makes a realistic evaluation of the youngsters potential and for which vacancies they qualify. The project tries to give the young people a more realistic self-image, and to explore their expectations and areas of interest.
Beyond the working context	VELO has a clear use in the community: the bicycle has huge potential for helping to overcome the transport problem. Young people at the margins of society can hence become part of the solution to a key problem. University students are calling on VELO's lower-skilled bicycle technicians for help, which may stimulate the feeling of self-worth of the part-time pupils.

PHASE 4: After-care	
After-care	After 9 months employment in the project**, VELO needs to find external paths of transfer** for the young people (to another form of part-time education or into regular employment).
	If no external path of transfer can be found, a serious problem arises; it is essential that the work experience is maintained to prevent the youngsters from losing the newly acquired attitudes to work and from losing their motivation.
	VELO built up an important network of employers and employment services; during the phase of after-care the youngster **can still appeal to their mentors for help.**

TERESA DE OLIVEIRA AND LOURENÇO FRAZÃO

SITUATED LEARNING AS A CHALLENGE FOR TEACHERS AND TRAINERS

1. INTRODUCTION

The growing number of young people who leave school without qualifications poses worrying questions for European society in general and for the Portuguese society in particular. The implications of this question are related to political, economic, social and educational issues.

It is a complex process for low achieving students to re-enter VET (Vocational Educational and Training) programmes. For the teachers and trainers as well as for the training institutions this is both a new challenge and an innovative situation. It is necessary to promote new approaches to learning which are specifically oriented to the needs of low achieving students, improving their responsibility, self-confidence, self-esteem and motivation in order to help them to re-enter VET programmes. That is to say teachers and trainers need to fulfil new roles such as tutoring, counselling, mediating. Thus, it is very important to create suitable training conditions for these educators to rise to new professional challenges. The perspective of "situated learning" within a real community of practice provides a way to reconceptualise the development of training according to the contexts and realities of these learners.

In this chapter the results of a secondary analysis are presented and implementation of new organisational process of teachers' and trainers' training is described. Factors are identified that promote or impede the emerging teachers' and trainers' training aimed at developing good practice towards low achieving students. The results are based on collected data of studies and research projects that give us an overview of the socio-economic realities, the context and expectations of the low achieving students and the societies in which they live. At the same time the analyses of these results suggest the need for a new form of training organisation, based on communities of practice, with institutional support and resources that allow teachers and trainers and the trainers of trainers to develop adequate training curricula.

2. WHO ARE THE 'LOW ACHIEVING STUDENTS'?

To understand the factors that promote or impede progress in developing teachers' and trainers' training aimed at developing good practice towards low achieving students, it is important first to characterise low achieving students. According to the Re-Enter concepts explained earlier in this book, low achieving students are the young people who drop out of the school system without completing compulsory education or have inadequate qualifications for entering into the VET system. This target group could be at risk of social exclusion. As Mallet (1999) says "today, … not having a diploma can lead to exclusion" (p.55). In modern society the development of a vocational activity is a main source of social integration. The lack of academic and professional qualifications of these young people seems to be one of the main factors limiting integration into work and social life.

According to Hammink (2000) we can identify two more groups of 'low achieving' students: i) those who have already left the school without a proper qualification but who manage on their own to gain a position despite the lack of formal qualification; ii) those who have already left the school without the initial qualifications to get a job. This group are usually long-term unemployed, show alienation from society and sometimes enter into marginal activities.

There is a great difficulty on the part of the low achieving students to define their needs for basic personal training and establish a project of their own. The institutional, social and economic formal measures available for meeting low achieving students' individual needs, fulfilling their life projects and enabling their participation in society, have generally not been effective. The young person needs a stable framework in a group of peers, in which motivation for leisure activities, including sports, may arise. Family guidance could outstrip much of the marginal behaviour, such as gang formation, drug use and other forms of violence[1]. However, the apathy, the lack of motivation for learning associated with unemployment, poor cultural, economic and social circumstances of their families, may easily lead to complex and uncontrollable problems of social exclusion and marginality. For low achievers it is easy to slide to the fringes of society and possibility into criminality, violence, drugs problems, because their own families are often themselves more or less socially excluded. However, when we focus on the analyses of exclusion, the causes of dropout can be found both in external factors outside education and within the education/training system.

An external factor outside education is the variety of customs maintained by groups from different countries or from different regions, a feature of current European society. To reinforce our perspective Hammink (2000) says, "There are big differences between cities and between regions in the nature of the activities, the way they are organised, the key actors…". However, it is important to clarify that the low achiever's problem is affected not only by the considerable number of youth with an immigrant background and ethnic minorities, but appears in the indigenous

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[1] data obtained through direct contact with the social reality and to the professional training programmes for the target group

population too. For both populations Hammink (2000) identifies the main factors that can explain the tendency for their social exclusion. For the author the main factors are i) low level of formal education; ii) poor mastery of language (spoken and written); iii) lack of social skills and relatively low income level. Apart from the language ability, these factors are common both for the ethnic minorities and for the indigenous youth.

3. INSTITUTIONAL FACTORS OF CHANGE

Present day society is characterised by deep social, cultural, technological and scientific challenges of significance to the educator:
- accelerated scientific development;
- technological modernisation;
- facilities to access knowledge;
- lifelong learning; competitiveness;
- globalisation;
- mobility;
- multiculturality and recognition of the value of each culture; social and personal diversity;
- the need of an inclusive society;
- increase of the social conflicts and the growth of unemployment.

All the characteristics and variabilities of present day society, present challenges to organisations that demand research and have implications for teachers' and trainers' new roles.

Some institutions have been developing transnational research projects, establishing co-operation protocols in order to identify the causes that lead young people to leave school, to find new ways of intervention and to formulate recommendations for researchers, practitioners and policy makers. For Hammink (2000) the approaches to minimise socio-economic and individual problems have to meet the following criteria: i) a direct and individual approach; ii) as little time as possible between the moment of the dropout and the first contacts made to support re-entry into VET; iii) re-integration in education or in learn/work situation; iv) counselling and (career) orientation; v) mentoring and support; vi) getting commitment from peers and important actors from the social environment; vii) development of co-operation structures between relevant actors in the society. These criteria suggest some ways in which teachers' and trainers' training can be adapted to the low achieving students' needs.

How does society respond to the social changes and to the new life expectations of the group of low achieving students? Institutions' organisational cultures areimportant because they influence the teacher's and trainer's training, as it relates to low achieving students. An academic training culture does not fulfil the goals of these students. It is necessary to change and innovate in order to create a learning community centred on practice (LCP).

The teachers and the trainers, who deal with the unbelievable complexity of learning and the challenges of low achieving students, can themselves be motivated to learn in practice in settings where they can have space and support to develop learning for key competencies. The acquisition and development of key competencies can be specially important for low achievers because they provide resources for work activity and part of the foundation for the process of life long learning. According to Nyhan (2000) "Organisational contexts which support learning for key competencies/qualifications can be referred to as learning organisations or learning-oriented organisations" (p.3). For this author "a learning organisation can be described as an institution which deliberately uses strategic and everyday tasks as opportunities for the enhancement of organisational effectiveness and the continuous development of individual competencies".[2] (p.8).

The implementation of an innovative initiative to achieve institutional change in teachers' and trainers' training is not easy. It is a developmental and learning process, which requires persistence, motivation and financial support. Thus, the institutions have to decide whether or not to change in order to accommodate specific needs not only of the low achieving students, but also of the people who work with them.

The basic problem seems to be related to the institutions' ethos, motivation, existing evaluation of practice and awareness of the culture change needed in order to implement new models and environments of learning like "situated learning" within communities of practice. The challenge is to persuade the institutions that work in this field is crucial and is not a marginal issue. It is necessary to implement policy, develop procedures and create infrastructures in order to allocate status, time, and resources, and to build up appropriate curricula and teaching/training material. In the search for effective ways of engaging low achieving students, the basic problem is to find ways to engage institutions, trainers, researchers and students "in the hard work of seeing the world as others see it" (Delpit, 1995; p.151).

4. THE EDUCATION AND TRAINING OF TEACHERS AND TRAINERS

A difficulty of the education/training system in reintegrating low achievers in VET system arises because there are a lot contextual, environmental, material and financial support needs. The human resources involved are often poorly prepared to solve these problems.

In the world of training, diversity has come to be viewed as an important dimension to be addressed by all (institutions, trainers, and researchers). The question of how to prepare teachers and trainers for culturally rich and economically diverse learning environments is central to teacher and trainer training.

Existing training methods for the low achieving students become unattractive, because they are based on formal and academic programmes of professional

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[2] We use key competencies in the sense of a series of interlinked and interdependent human actions with the possession of a self-organising or self steering capacity comprising integrated cognitive, social, business and technological dimensions underlying the capacity for long life learning.(see Nijhof and Streumer, 1998) However, the level of assessment of these competencies should be adapted to low achieving students.

training. The complexity of the different forms of knowledge and skills acquisition necessary to be active participants within modern organisations deeply contrasts to the abstract knowledge provided by formal education (Boreham et al, 2002). Thus, the attempts to implement the formal programmes for low achieving students have not been adequate to this target group. Laestadius and Hallman (1999) refer to ways in which "the analyses of the so-called dropout problem and the discussion on how to handle it has been heavily focused on the formal educational system" (p.39).

The statement of Madelino (2000) reinforces our analyses of the situation when he states that vocational training is "the privileged instrument for young people's valorisation, through the operationalisation of formative solutions regarding the needs and interest of each student and shaped to his own life project" (p.2). The nonsense is that the institutional perspective reinforces the lack of legal documentation and does not permit the implementation of more flexible training projects or informal training adequate to the needs of this young people. In fact, as Laestadius and Hallman (1999) state "research and policy discussion on learning and training has been heavily focused on formal education systems" (p.39).

Finding an approach to teachers' and trainers' education and training for working with low achieving students involves a lot of different aspects and realities, which depend on the contexts, the autonomy of the institutions and the co-operation between the local enterprises. It also depends on the previous preparation and training of the teachers and trainers involved.

The development of teachers' and trainers' professional activity requires continuous training to answer actual social needs. According to Garcia's (1998) perspective, the understanding that professional development "is a process characterised by the continuous reflection about daily experience" (p.53) is needed. This means that while the teachers' professional performance develops in complex situations, there exists at the same time the desire to learn and improve continuously. These statements seem to mean that teachers' and trainers' training should develop according to a dynamic process, throughout their life, with different experiential levels, knowledge acquisition and development of key competencies. The training of teachers/trainers faces some severe problems in dealing with groups of young people with the specific characteristics of low achieving students. These problems are related to how to captivate and how to incentivise these young people in order to create their own life projects, and develop strategies for their social insertion.

Teachers' and trainers' training for good practices in this field calls for people who are:

reflective;
motivated, flexible, and adaptable to different contexts;
creative, with capacity to make controlled decisions;
responsible;
capable of communicating and establish good interpersonal relationship;
able to understand the dynamic nature of the youth existence;
able to communicate with diverse cultures;
willing to run risks, while knowing how to assess their limits;
capable of working in a team and in communities of practice;
knowledgeable of the needs of the society and the target group;
prepared to include work with low achieving students in their professional project;
engaged in their own training;
dynamic and with capacity for negotiation and organisation of community activities;
willing to undertake long life learning, and considering learning as thinking.

Teachers, trainers and researchers have given particular attention to the problem of low achieving students' needs. To respond to these needs teachers and trainers have to give up isolation, individualism and privacy and even move beyond simple collaboration activities into creating real and authentic learning communities centred on practice. The interdependence between members of the community of practice is also creative (between teacher/trainer and students as well as between trainers of trainers and teacher/trainer). Interpersonal relationships are developed through the negotiation, the maintenance and the sustenance of relationships. They are also shaped by the nature of the dialogue and communication among the members of the community.

In training activity, the innovation is linked with the contextual change, the curricular flexibility or the creation of alternative curricula. The professional training of teachers and trainers must be able to deal with these innovations in order to promote learning of low achieving students. For Putnam and Borko (1999) "education and research are very rich in new ideas and concepts about the nature of the cognition and learning" (p.1). Terms like "situated cognition", "distributive cognition", and now "situated learning" (Lave and Wenger, 1991; Evans and Hoffmann 2000) are new emerging concepts. The common idea underlying these concepts is that every human thought and action is linked to the specific physical or social context. They are situated because what people perceive, how they conceive of their activity, and what they do together and in an interactive way. Besides these concepts, the concept of "communities of practice" is innovative when applied to training and entails a fundamental redefinition of learning and training. People together have more ideas than one single person does. Learning in the context of sharing, responding and communicating with others is a valuable training strategy.

Within a learning community centred on practice individual knowledge and competencies fuse developing an integrated and polyvalent human resource. As the process of learning is social, it is important to create LCPs in which teachers, trainers and low achieving students engage in mutual learning with a rich discourse about the main ideas. However, it is necessary to ensure that within these communities the communication is purposeful and worthwhile.

One goal of the learning communities is to find new life projects for the low achieving students where re - connection in and through VET can become a reality. For Putnam and Borko (1999) it is important to discover the best training methodologies and strategies which "help students to develop deep understanding of subject matter", and "situate student's learning in meaningful contexts" (p.1). Teachers and trainers with life experiences different from the low achieving students, and the lack of models of previous good practices of teaching with these students often leads to the considerable difficulties in implementing training projects in ways which enlarge the low achieving students competencies. The participation of these students and other important educational elements organised in LCPs, reinforces the need for training based on multidisciplinary and interprofessional teams with different life experiences and strongly commitment to learning success. In working with low achieving students, the teachers and trainers should be self-critical with respect to their own experience and their academic attitudes. Teaching and training careers should not only be understood as "accumulation of cognitive knowledge" (Niemeyer, 2000:7). Multidisciplinary teams help teachers and trainers to train for new professional roles and rotate their functions when necessary. The creation of multidisciplinary teams through LCPs, inside and outside schools, is an important way of decreasing the constraints in providing the necessary measures and activities to motivate low achieving students. Participation within communities of practice "is not itself an educational form, much less a pedagogical strategy or a teaching technique. It is an analytical viewpoint of learning, a way of understanding learning" (Lave and Wenger, 1991, p.40). In Re-Enter initiatives the concept of communities of practice is adapted to teaching, to training and to the learning process. In the sense given by Lave and Wenger (1991), teamwork as members of LCPs reflects the concept of situated learning.

The "enveloping" of many different actors in the training plan is considered as a quality indicator, because it allows a personal and professional dynamic training, integrated in a larger process of social development. The great innovation is the intervention – in its creation as well as in its administrative and pedagogic management – of a social-economic partnership with strong local implementation, with the support and involvement of the community. This is a sure warranty that the training articulates with the learning and the needs and interests of the evolving society. However, it necessitates a shift of the role of the teacher and the trainer to being not only a transmitter of knowledge but being responsible for innovative management of the learning process and sensitive to the specific context and identity of the low achieving students. Some new teacher and trainer profiles are emerging as the roles of mediators, integration technicians, competencies evaluators, counsellors,

tutors become apparent. It is important to know how teachers and trainers learn new ways to act.

Another important question is the recognition that learning is not unidirectional. The learning process is transversal and in its appeal to the society involves all the actors in the learning process. In a social perspective the central goal of education is to acculturate those young people at risk of social exclusion. Thus, the teachers and trainers need to appeal to their own knowledge in various domains, but it is also essential to take in account the low achievers' previous knowledge and experience, and to prepare them for lifelong learning. To do that it is important to adapt teachers' and trainers' discourses to the various communities, equipping them with competence in using concepts and forms of reasoning that characterise the communities where they work. This perspective leads to questions of what kinds of discourses the teachers and trainers need in order to establish relationships for motivating disengaged young people.

Oliveira and Frazão (2000) propose systematic "variations of short term learning activities, working with others, creating problems as pair problems solving, promoting full participation, providing precise feedback and encouraging self-assessment and reflection by the learner." (p.5). These factors are important for motivation, improve self-confidence and for knowledge construction. In line with our reflection about teachers' and trainers' training and their new roles, we argue that this training should be organised in communities of practice, as well the teaching and the learning activities.
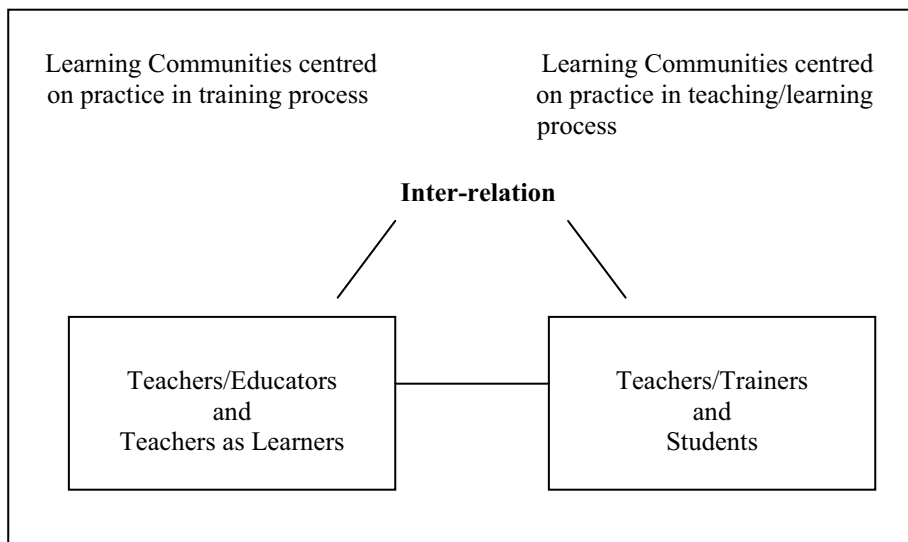

Figure 1. Learning Communities centred on practice in RE-ENTER initiatives.

In this proposed organisation of training, teachers and trainers and young people could develop a language of learning and learn how to think talk and act according to the society in which they are involved.

Learning takes place throughout the whole person's life. In a constructivist point of view, learning is a permanent construction and reconstruction of knowledge by the individual. Knowledge as socially constructed makes it clear that an important part of learning involves enculturation. Thus, it is important for the teachers, trainers, trainers of trainers, researches and the other actors involved in the educational process to identify key characteristics of the relevant social contexts based on research and experiences in the field. The identification of these characteristics can be carried out in an environment of effective learning, which increases the reflection and the understanding of the different cultures in the community of practice. The work with young people may offer to teachers and trainers the possibility for creating such experiences, to prepare these students to face challenges, and to help and encourage them to return to VET.

The learning may occur not only in specific training situations, but also in different contexts: in social activities, at the workplace, in leisure activities, in self-directed learning, or in the family. Thus, teachers and trainers and students also learn within experiences outside the formal classroom and at school. Teachers and trainers should research situations, real life circumstances and what they expect from the workplace or participation in leisure activities, in order to know students real problems in life circumstances, and what they expect from Re-Enter programmes. To reinforce this perspective Putnam and Borko (1999) argue that the question is not 'whether knowledge and learning', but in what context they are situated. In fact, situated learning experiences for teachers and trainers outside the classroom (especially in different socio-economic environments and in work contexts in different organisational enterprises) are essential for powerful learning.

5. IS LEARNING FOR 'RE-ENTER' STUDENTS, TEACHERS AND TRAINERS TRAINING DISCONNECTED?

The experiences in the field, based in situated learning within communities of practice, are very interesting for the improvement of ideas concerning the teachers' and trainers' training. Oliveira and Frazão (2000) suggest that is important for the training process to "define the training in broader terms, which included supports for young people to achieve viable and socially legitimate life styles" (p.5). For these authors this plan could move in flexible graded steps, both for low achieving students learning and for teachers' and trainers' training. For teachers and trainers graded training gives them security in their work. For low achieving students the training in graded steps gives them the opportunity to develop their competencies for work and increases their motivation to re-enter in VET system, to the point when they feel ready and in a position to re-enter without future failure. The training plan should be built at the interface of personal, social and professional development projects of the individual with the labour market needs, within the concept of "situated learning".

For teachers/trainers as well as for the low achieving students, training at school can alternate with the training on the job organised in LCPs and defined with the participation of all the people involved in the curricular organisation. In all learning projects it is important to have on going communication among the different actors, but in these special programmes Lazar (1999) states that "communication represents a key element at the social level to facilitate social insertion" (p.4).

According to Oliveira and Frazão (2000) the chosen curricular development model for teachers´ and trainers´ training and for the low achieving students training should be based on modular structures and project work. The trainers and the trainees could establish direct contact to the labour market, raise questions, and formulate problems. This contact could have different forms such as: taking a training post in companies representing different professional areas; doing programmed and sequential visits to workplace, and collaborating with enterprise mentors.

"What it means to know and learn" needs research support and reflection for all the actors involved in these kinds of problems. Policy level decisions on teachers' and trainers' training processes are necessary. These should be underpinned by research and consultation in order to understand community needs and the target group's expectations.

6. A PORTUGUESE CASE STUDY

The following case study demonstrates how a teacher training process based on the principles of situated learning within a learning community of practice can be implemented in line with these ideas.

6.1 The aims and goals

This case study provides an example of possible practice towards teachers/trainers training. In this study the training of teachers and training for new roles was one aspect of a study of broader scope. The case study aimed at analysis and reflection about the programmes which guide young people for vocational education and training (VET). The programme aimed to fight against social exclusion, by improving educational and professional qualification and consequently facilitating the employment prospects and fostering the potential and well-being of low achieving students. The specific goals were: to start, continue or extend professional education to develop students intellectual flexibility and ability to adapt appropriately to change; to acquire the essential theoretical background for future professional careers; to access basic knowledge and develop key competencies required for the first steps in employment.

6.2 The learning organisation

The case study was carried out in a large and traditional Lisbon vocational school integrated in the formal training system. This school is not concerned merely with

transmission of knowledge and formal training. It is, simultaneously, an institution of social action, which shelters, supports and prepares the youth for an 'adjusted' professional and social integration. The team responsible for the school and the teachers and trainers (technicians) identified the need to create a resource centre for social and professional reintegration to support young people that drop out of the regular courses of this school. The reasons for this initiative were related to the characteristics of the target group, their qualifications and personal and training needs and the empirical observation that the vocational learning was not enough for their integration either in VET or in the labour market. This centre is not a formal organisation.

6.3 The target group

The programme was oriented towards the young people that were living in a social/cultural-disadvantaged area where unemployment is particularly high. The rate of school drop out means that this is the normal trajectory for the young people of the area. The target group, those more than 16 years old and at risk of social exclusion, presents both cognitive and social difficulties. General discontent with school is explained by the lack of a suitable offer of projects, conditions and interests, and a general feeling that an academic curriculum has no relevance to their needs. Some young people may be inactive or at risk of entering into socially destructive activity. The marginal economy is a daily style of life and unemployment is not always associated within poverty, although related to it. Many young people start work early in their lives to make money quickly, either out of their own motivation or out of a necessity imposed by their families. In this case, their income source soon becomes more important than school activities leading to early school leaving. For many young people practical training is the most important as they envisage quick entry into labour market. Work is not linked to a vocational path implying a personal project for the future, pursuit of personal satisfaction or family tradition, but the motivation is the acquisition of financial income. The daily life is centred on their neighbourhood, which has no supporting structures for youth: the street is their preferred meeting point. They follow the role models of their own 'significant persons'. For those who have fallen out of the formal system the notion of re integration into it may be a problem for two main reasons: because there may not have capacity for them within the formal system and because they may not wish, for the present at least, to re-enter it.

6.4 The duration of the programme

The programme could last from one to three years according the needs of each young participant.

6.5 The teachers, the trainers and the school members of the learning community centred on practice

A psychologist, a sociologist, trainers, teachers, company tutors, technicians of social system, technicians of reintegration in labour market, the co-ordinator of the school and the students were involved in this LCP.

6.6 The activities

The activities of the programme were based on the previous diagnosis of needs and motivations. Three possible training trajectories were created; the curricular organisation integrated technical/practical training, general training and social and cultural training; continuous support for a direct integration in the labour market; vocational and personal guidance and information about the available measures for re-integration. In a more specific way the activities provided information about the vocational alternatives, the selection of the trainees and the reintegration companies, the 'welcome' activities (visits to different companies, activities of group dynamics with the participation of all the members of the LCP. The identification of the problems and circumstances of each trainee (trainee individual interviews and if possible family interviews), informs the guidance activity, the training (in classroom and on the job), the trainees' continuous support in companies (in stages or in direct trainee integration process in the labour market). Evaluation encompasses the formative evaluation of trainees (professional performance, behaviour, attitudes), and programme evaluation (on trainers' and trainees' satisfaction, number of trainees who get a job or re-enter in formal professional training, level of communication within the LCP).

This whole situation sets several specific challenges to professional teacher training. New training methods and "new" trainers were necessary. Before the planning of the training programme, the members of the LCP carried out an analysis of the personal and training needs of the target group. The assessment of the prior knowledge and experiences of the learner and his/her expectations was very important in order to plan adequate learning/training activities according to the identity, needs, expectations and motivations of the low achieving students. This analysis was made directly with representatives of employers' groups, directors of human resources, social workers, planners at regional level, teachers, and also directly with the young people belonging to the disadvantaged group.

Throughout the entire programme, all the members were involved in the establishment of action strategies, in debating ideas, in reflection about the methodologies carried out, in the planning and production of the training modules, in the choice and management of contents and materials for each module, in the implementation of the training process and in the evaluation. The materials developed to support concrete learning activities were adjusted and adapted to students for use in the classroom and in the work training. Materials included both hands-on and computer-based information and communication technologies. All materials were shared among the participants who also contributed their own

experience of practice, reflection and evaluation of training processes and work impact. With these learning activities it was expected that low achievers could: begin to construct a life project (personal, social and professional); to increase their level of autonomy and problem solving (capability to make decisions/to choose/to search for solutions); to develop affective relationships; to improve self confidence and personal and social self image; to recognise rules and norms; to increase levels of full participation; to mobilise the previous know-how and experiences; to increase the assiduity, to develop self confidence and self esteem, co-operation and responsibility.

In the normal work of teachers/trainers and students within an LCP the teacher/trainer turns to the students themselves to help them reflect upon the reasons for their training results. On the one hand, the way content was taught/learned was stressed: a slow pace, in accordance with the students' conceptual demands (the students said that the contents were easy), interactive classes (teachers said everyone participated), and in hands-on material. One student replied that he did not study because he learned in the lessons. The teachers' evaluation methods were designed to provide them with better knowledge of their students' learning processes. The students were the first to remark that teachers did tests following small content units, gave feedback, and repeated them if they did not learn. The students reached the conclusion that the answer for their learning success was in the class strategies and in the real work situations, the attention the teachers paid to them and to their difficulties, and the value they gave to their work and knowledge. Giving students responsibilities (for example, giving them an important role in monitoring a collective exhibition) was often the best solution to show the teacher's trust and the best way for the students to reveal themselves to the other members of the LCP. Again, the students taught other students, peer teaching helping them to organise the concepts in their own minds. The students became teachers in the work and in school. This was very important for the students because they developed awareness of the importance of their own knowledge and competencies as well as the importance of the knowledge and competencies of the other students and the teachers.

6.7 The teacher/trainer training process

There are many challenges in building a teacher/trainer training project. Several meetings took place to discuss and agree the principles and organisation of the learning process. The negotiation of the concept of learning implied the identification of values which challenged general values of learning. Competence building was not enough, it should aimed at a holistic view of the learning.

Learning was based on the principle of situated learning and the development of learning communities (supporting autonomous abilities for learning, managing competencies, developing common expertise, sharing and linking of distinctive know-how, individual performance and experience). Social interaction was a critical component of situated learning. Trainers of trainers, teachers and trainers in the training process became involved in the LCP in ways which mirrored teachers and

students in the learning programmes. This approach to learning required good team building skills (particularly useful in breaking down disciplinary divisions).

Relationships based on co-operation, friendship and encouragement nourished learning and did not undermine discipline. They facilitated individual development paths and trust relationships between persons. Throughout the programme, more and more training meetings took place, in different environments, in order to motivate the participants in the LCP, who listened to each other, discussed theoretical approaches and negotiated the methodologies, the activities to be implemented, the materials, the evaluation tools, reflecting and reformulating what was not appropriate. Modular training courses were implemented about psychology, sociology, health sciences, history, education, politics. Regular field study in different work organisations and activities in the geographic area was organised. Also meetings were organised with the families, relevant persons in the local authorities, and in the social/cultural organisations (including solidarity, medical and employment centres, sports, arts and leisure spaces). These located activities were crucial for integrating practical and theoretical training. They involved learning a specific 'language of learning' and creating a climate of trust and co-operation to enable pedagogical training of the technicians responsible for training in the companies (tutors). They aimed to give a better understanding of the labour market and technical training to teachers who come from the formal educational system with scientific and pedagogical training, but no work experience. Workshops in the educational community (involving school, students, parents, employers, local government, unions) were organised in order to discuss low achieving students' problems, daily life styles, culture, values, beliefs and suitable personal, social and job skills.

Later, the problems that arose in the field were discussed and related research activities were implemented. This research included both hands on work, and library or computer search. Internet and web resources were used to share findings, ask questions and compare field sites. This multi-activity approach to training was planned and developed in order to understand low achieving students' learning as a complex system where specific forms of knowledge from different fields of science are inter - linked.

Teachers/trainers and trainers of teachers and trainers from different academic fields working together developed an action research activity linked with ongoing training. In informal talks, formal meetings (often at week - ends), project work, or in workshops all participants shared experiences and knowledge, solved problems, jointly planned the activities, evaluated and redirected the actions.

Therefore, the training gave to teachers/trainers flexibility to rotate functions (tutors, counsellors, mediators, reintegration officers) and created an environment which they could take risks and propose to each other different modes of organisation for carrying out learning tasks. The enthusiasm of the teachers and trainers for teaching in a new way suggests more investment is needed in developing the training alternatives in this field.

6.8 The evaluation

The participants faced severe difficulties but at the end of the programme, internal evaluation (both formal and informal), showed that the programme had achieved a positive outcome, meeting the initial goals and the real needs of the target group. The training methodologies, and the methodologies of working within the LCP, the close relationship with the local environment were features that all the participants considered innovative. Situated learning for low achieving students seems easier in non-formal settings where co-operation of interdisciplinary teams inside and outside schools (trainers, tutors, counsellors, social workers, reintegration officers, employment centres) was organised in an LCP. Here they found less constraints in supplying the necessary measures and activities to get these young people re-engaged with education and the work market.

The results were good. Some young people found a job. Some young people re-entered into the formal education system. The communications between the young people, school, families, local institutions and communitarian organisations were strengthened. Teachers were satisfied with their professional performance and felt themselves more competent in working with low achieving students. They revealed confidence when talking about the training they developed, the situations they had to control in order to feel at ease, the joy of small victories in the integration of the students and the learning outcomes. They felt that the training process integrated in an LCP had overcome the frustration of the initial results and they felt professionally and socially recognised. They were confident that the outcomes and the training process could be transferable to other programmes by sharing their experience and by devising an enlarged methodology of dissemination. It was a starting point.

For the future, each member intended to work further within the LCP, enlarging it by involving more national institutions, representatives of employer's groups, and representatives of the vocational training policy makers. The members of the LCP also intended to produce informational pictures/panels where the activities could be exhibited. The role of each member could be extended to collaboration in the supervision of the intervention projects, and in the dissemination of the activities. At the policy level they presented proposals for the renewal of curricula, didactics and student support structure related with VET geared to the young people's needs and expectations. They suggested creation of specific learning trajectories to fit the capacities of the low achieving students, to lead them towards the highest possible levels of qualification, to build the capacity and motivation for further education, VET programmes or engagement in lifelong learning activities.

The evaluation of teachers' and trainers' training highlights certain elements of professional knowledge that guide the teachers' and trainers' work. In the framework of situated learning within LCPs, we reflect upon both the conditions to create a learning organisation and the professional teacher/trainer knowledge, namely pedagogical content knowledge, content knowledge, curriculum knowledge, and the knowledge of low achieving students' ways of learning. This may help the teacher/trainer training process to be underpinned by a better understanding of how low achieving students can attain good results in VET or the labour market. This

understanding implies challenges to curricula, innovation, research into training methods, and fundamental re-definitions of teachers' and learners' roles and functions.

7. CONCLUSIONS

We have argued that we cannot disconnect teachers' and trainers' training from the young people in the learning process. At the present time teacher and trainers training is inadequate for the challenge of designing situated learning environments where they can acquire and develop required competencies. To combine the training of students and the continuing training of teachers and trainers in learning communities centred in practice can be one possible solution. Thus, new models of teachers' and trainers' training are needed to expand their views, to implement situated learning and to engage them in real LCPs. The construction of a human resource with such characteristics is a long-term endeavour but the collaboration and co-operation between different members contributing specific knowledge and experience is essential.

It is urgent to promote research and discussion between the scientific and the educational community, the policy makers, and the local and national institutions that provide education/training of young people. It is necessary to identify the factors that promote and impede the emerging teachers' and trainers' training for good practices towards low achieving students learning.

To implement teachers' and trainers' training in a context of situated learning organised in communities of practice we need

- real engagement of teachers and trainers in their own training (interactive social learning);
- training in context - recognition that teachers and trainers must be located and engaged in context (experiencing significant situations. Managing the concepts, meanings, understandings, believes and values);
- training in communities of practice - multidisciplinary teamwork (organised by the different elements of the educational and of the work society with mutual acknowledgement and sharing of their diversified knowledge);
- reflective training (questioning, researching, justifying and reformulating);
- differentiation of training for specific tasks of teachers and trainers as well as the development of their new competencies and roles like tutors, counsellors, mediators, etc.;
- more flexible and non academic training, in graded steps, leading teachers and trainers to reflexive attitudes regarding the possible contribution that the society might demand from them;
- curricular organisation of training in modular structure and project work;
- training outside school at workplace and at social activities to be aware of low achieving students expectations regarding Re-Enter initiatives;
- development of national networks and transnational projects.

Based on the findings of this study we can identify some factors that are impeding teachers' and trainers' training in order to motivate and guide low achieving students for re-entry into VET programmes. These factors are related to the lack of:

- political courage to recognise that the situations of the low achieving students are not solved with administrative measures or with formal/academic programmes;
- adequate curricula and strategies for teachers' and trainers' training to deal to the diversity and specificity of the low achieving students;
- teacher's and trainer's training in order to develop competencies for establishing communication with the target population and their involved community;
- integration of teachers and trainers regarding different communities and contexts;
- co-operation between school and labour market;
- teachers' and trainers' social recognition involved with social integration projects as well as in VET programmes;
- organisational support for teachers and trainers to participate in different activities of the communities.

Engaging the motivation of low achieving students to re-enter VET programmes implies that we need to find new roles for teachers and trainers. It is necessary to provide incentives and adequate training for implementing good practices within the framework of situated learning. Findings and conclusions of research based on learning communities centred on practice can provide important indicators for the development of more effective policies in this area.

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ANJA HEIKKINEN[1]

RE-ENTER INITIATIVES IN THE CONTEXT OF INTEGRATIVE VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING

1. INTRODUCTION: RE-ENTER AS A MANUFACTURED PROBLEM?

During the emergence of policies directed towards 'management by projects'–, remedial programmes for problem groups – low-achievers, disadvantaged, ageing, women, ethnic minorities - have become increasingly attractive all over Europe. The reflections of this chapter emerge from the Nordic cultural tradition, where welfare-policies have been constituted on principles of universalism and comprehensive experience. In EU-led national policies the Re-Enter measures are commonly taken as separate, corrective activities to the "deficiencies of the traditional education", which do not demand the critical analysis of the mainstream policies dealing with education, employment, social or youth policy, nor of the relations between the different sectors of policy. When considering the 'goodness' of the various Re-Enter programmes and practices in isolation in different European countries, there is a danger of forgetting the context in which they are embedded, i.e. the realities of the mainstream education and work. Parallel to changes in educational policy and reforms, the contexts and rules of work, the patterns of employment and utilisation of human resources have changed. The intensity, i.e. time-space compression, of work is rapidly growing, the risks of market fluctuations are increasingly delegated to individual employees and teams and organisations are becoming the prime reference for peoples identification. The flexibility of working life as well as communities and families - which are also increasingly conditioned by markets - is diminishing towards varieties and complexities in ways of life and in different periods of life, which are not directly and explicitly efficient from market

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[1]This chapter is based on the Finnish final report for Re-Enter project, primarily prepared by Kristiina Laiho. She is to be thanked for the basic work, but the possible deficiencies of the chapter, due to substantial changes made to the report, are my fault.

economical perspective. This is the context, where the problem groups of mainstream education and employment are identified and the measures developed for managing them in a most cost-effective way.

The European-wide commitment to the concept of competence with its connotation of performance and its observable, measurable outcomes promotes the disappearance of indigenous understandings of occupational skills, know how and behaviour. This implies their decontextualisation from occupational growth processes, embedded in occupational life forms and cultural formations. Whilst the management of skills formation through occupational and VET systems has become increasingly complicated, expensive and dysfunctional for trans-national economical processes, the global politics of promoting life long learning have become dominant. This favours public (formal) provision for learning general (generic) skills and informal, on-the-job or situated learning for organisation-specific skills. Crucial in the competence-based discourse is the fragmentation of occupations, as personal and collective life forms into separate classes of abilities, performances and character traits, which contribute to successful individual, collective and societal behaviour in the different markets.

The national translation of trans-nationalising policy tends to change the meaning of Nordic ideas of universal rights to participate into universal criteria to control participation. The search for ways of prompting low-achieving young people to re-enter into vocational education and successful employment is a deficiency approach: the youngsters are diagnosed as lacking the competences, which belong to the mainstream normality. The crucial argument of this chapter is that in the asymmetry of included and excluders, the key for inclusion is in the deconstruction of exclusion. The progress of welfare societies in Europe required fragmentation and segmentation in viewing human beings, life-world and society, which promoted the segmentation and fragmentation of policies, governance, expertise and professional practices. Therefore, another argument is that without developing more holistic and integrated policies, isolated Re-Enter programmes may only feed the need for their continuity. The change of policy may, however, be impossible without the initiative role of institutions and actors, who in different countries have become the holders of educational responsibility.

1.1 Re-Enter under the policy of promoting lifelong learning

In the Nordic countries the concept of education has since the 1970s been substituted by schooling (vocational, general or adult forms). The Finnish educational system is unified and organised mainly by municipalities and by the state. In practice all children complete comprehensive school by 16 years old: in the 1990s, only 0.2% left the comprehensive school without a leaving certificate. Upper secondary schools (gymnasia) provide three years of general education leading to the national matriculation examinations and vocational schools providing 3 years of occupationally qualifying education and training. Although accessible to all, polytechnics are usually entered after upper secondary or vocational school, universities requiring the matriculation examination. Sooner or later almost 95% of

the comprehensive school-leavers start in post-compulsory education. Statistically, about 7-11% of students at upper secondary or vocational education break off their studies. In most cases this is because they change their pathway.[2] Apprenticeship leads to the same vocational degrees as in VET institutes and covers only about 5% of the intake to vocational training. It is mainly targeted towards adult workers for accreditation of their previous learning. According to government policy, apprenticeship training for those under 20 years old should be increased with the ESF-support. It may also be part of the innovative youth workshop training. Another type of apprenticeship training is targeted to those less than 25 years old, who may already have a diploma but who have difficulties in finding a job.

The tenth grade came in the late 1970s as an alternative to help young people to enter VET or upper secondary school. The main aim has been to improve the grades in the school-leaving certificate. The number of pupils has been small, in 1998 only 2289.[3] Since 1999, it has been possible to integrate the tenth grade into other classes in the comprehensive school or to choose only one subject. The object of the reform of the tenth grade is to make it a more flexible alternative for all those who want to weigh in their minds what they want to do. Furthermore, inside measures of "guiding education", targeted to individuals with difficulties in entering into education or employment, young people also have an opportunity to become familiar with VET. E.g. the guiding education in social and health care lasts half a year including theory and practice and providing credits for applying to formal VET.

The reforms from the 1990s in the mainstream educational system (under the educational policy of promoting lifelong learning and of developing Finland into a leading ICT and learning society) implicitly contributed to separate measures in the Re-Enter problem. (cf. NBE, 2001) Structurally they have meant creation of a 2-level system in post-compulsory education: upper secondary education is carried out through the gymnasium or VET school/apprenticeship and higher education is in polytechnics or university. The achieved level of education is more decisive than the occupational orientation for the career of the lifelong learning employee. All post-compulsory mainstream education is transforming into an educational service cluster, responding to the learning needs in clusters of other industries. For provision of education services, regional consortia of institutes have been formed. Substantially, reforms mean introduction of broad, flexible learning profiles at secondary VET, with the possibility of achieving the entry qualifications for higher education, and modularisation and individualisation of the learning pathways. Crucial for popular expectations concerning VET is the introduction of science-based technological expertise at polytechnics as an alternative to traditional academic professionalism. Achievement in academic learning is gaining importance as the decisive factor in individual career progress. Pedagogically the reforms mean increasing delegation of occupation-specific learning to work-sites, transformation of teachers into managers of learning environments and institutes into company-like

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[2] Koulutus 1998:1
[3] Helsingin Sanomat 14th of May 1999

organisations, which transfer the responsibility for learning to students and market-led projects, especially at polytechnic level. More control and power in recognition of occupations, skills and learning needs is given to organisational human resource development measures.

The national curriculum for VET in Finland follows the trans-nationally emerging paradigm of competence-based learning (NBE 2001). Common aims and core competences for all forms of education are skills of acting in international study and work environments, understanding and motivation to act according to principles of sustainable development, basic skills in ICT enabling participation in information society as worker and citizen, entrepreneurial skills, basic skills in quality management, skills as a consumer and in occupational safety and competence for caring for own health. In vocational education, core competences for all occupational branches are learning (to learn), problem solving, commanding oral, written and ICT-based communication situations, collaboration and flexible and sensitive action in human relations (interaction) and teams, managing, solving and understanding ethical and esthetical values, responsible, fair and just behaviour in work. Both the common aims and core competences should be reflected in the way the whole school and its practices are organised and included in branch specific curricula and assessment. However, most of them are explicitly included in the common learning areas of curriculum. The aim of providing the possibility to achieve matriculation in practice tends to make them into academic courses equivalent to gymnasium.

1.2 Re-Enter in activating labour market policy

In the 1990s the level of unemployment, especially among young people, reached a higher level than ever before in Finland. Since the World War II the youth unemployment rate had been very low, but now it grew over 30%. During the recession, as part of the active labour market policy, programmes for the young expanded considerably. The two main types were labour market training and subsidised employment. (Aho and Vehviläinen, 1997). The first one was offered mainly to adult unemployed and those who are threatened by it. The courses provide formal vocational qualifications or sometimes raise the general abilities of participants. The subsidised employment was offered mainly to the long-term unemployed or the young without work experience. The majority of the jobs were provided by the public sector and offered for six months. The most typical subsidised employment opportunity was apprenticeship training with labour market subsidy, which meant that the young person received no wage, did not have a formal employment agreement with the employer, but had a subsidy paid by the employment authorities.

In 1996, 41% of unemployed under 20 years participated in active labour market policy programmes: in labour market training 1470, in subsidised jobs 2180 and in apprenticeship with labour market subsidy 4730. Before 1996, the young who did not find a job or continue in post-compulsory education had the right to the unemployment subsidy. Since then the law required that every unemployed person

under 25 must apply for vocational training or enter labour market policy programmes, otherwise they lose their benefit. At the same time, considerable extra resources up to 9,000 new annual starting places at secondary level were allocated. In addition, those less than 20-years-old were given preference among applicants for vocational schools. According to Aho and Vehviläinen (1997, p.1) "the reform emphasises the stick of removing the monetary subsidy, and offers the carrot of practically unrestricted access to (at least some form of) vocational training". Despite economic recovery since the late 1990s, long term unemployment and casual work contracts have remained high in Finnish society. The youth unemployment rates have decreased considerably, but the anxiety about the future remains among families and young people. (Koponen, 2002)

1.3 Specification of Re-entry problem in the project context

Whilst re-entry has recently emerged as a problem in Finland, whose problem is it? The question can be considered from four perspectives: functioning of the *labour market*, effectiveness and responsiveness of the (vocational) *education providers*, functioning of the *civil society* and satisfaction in the *individual life-course*. In relation to them, the problem of re-entry may have different and even contradictory meanings. During the worst recession, there were serious political concerns about young people becoming socially excluded because of long-term unemployment. The welfare costs were estimated as 60 thousand million marks.[4] From the perspective of *labour markets* and *civic life*, educational problems translate into problems of labour market, economy and economical and social coherence.. This relates to the fact that in Finland formal education is highly appreciated and employment is based on educational qualifications. According to educational policy, it does not only prepare individuals socially, but it also provides generic, transferable work skills and knowledge. Even the second best choice of education can always be utilised. Research repeatedly demonstrates the importance of education: without qualifications, it is seldom possible to obtain a permanent job and the threat of unemployment is most obvious at some time in the future. (Koponen, 2002, Vähätalo, 1998, Virtanen, 1996) The longer the time without work or studies in vocational school the higher the risk of becoming unemployed and socially excluded in the future. Re-Enter is a question of obtaining educational qualifications as a certificate, which protects against unemployment and improves educational opportunities.

   Among *education providers*, the re-entry problem among upper secondary school (gymnasium) leavers is marginal. The situation can become problematic if the young repeatedly apply to university but are not accepted. Making vocational education both in secondary and higher level attractive to young people is a permanent challenge for the institutes. A real Re-Enter problem for institutes is students breaking off their studies. The selection system of upper secondary

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[4] Nuorisoasianneuvottelukunta 1999

education is demanding, because the educational choice has to be done at the age of 15-16, when most young people are not ready for the choice of profession. The actual amount of 'breaking-off' is uncertain, since the statistics are not accurate and much of the breaking off from studies is virtual, i.e. due to the cruising of students from school to school. The centralised student selection sometimes hinders students from entering into the field of study they would like or they find themselves to be in the wrong occupational area. On the other hand, students are free to reapply and move from field to field and from school to school. Since the financing of VET institutes has become dependent on the number of students, they also do not break offs. In the interview of Helsingin Sanomat[5] some headmasters argued that the break off has raised in recent years, because more students come from families who have suffered from recession and the schools have less resources – reduced student guidance and social activities and bigger classes – to face the educational challenges. Therefore, students are restless and they sometimes have serious difficulties in learning.

For *individuals*, the need to Re-Enter can be a problem caused by the labour market policy: if they do not enter school, they have to enter job placement (subsidised employment) or employment courses. A small group of youngsters refuse, lose their benefits and live at the expense of their parents or friends and are one target group for the re-entry measures. However, a break in educational and work career needs not to be a problem. E.g. in her research on dropouts from VET, Komonen (1999) found out that young people often have fragmentary pathways both in education and in employment. They want to try different studies like they want to try different jobs. According to Komonen, the decision to break off their studies is often an unconditional, emotional and stable expression of a person's present situation, which does not mean to be everlasting. For many it is "a long break", a time for taking a deep breath before starting to study again. Komonen found different groups of dropouts. One consists of young people, who do not get support from their parents, who have their own problems, which take their time and energy. These families often have a tradition to find a job and not to educate oneself. Another group of drop outs desires adult status, which combined with little parental control makes it possible for the young (usually a girl) to move to a student house and try to manage all by him/herself. Gradually the young feels that he/she cannot handle the life situation.

The "obligation to education" has developed as the dark side of the educational policy of equality and comprehensiveness. Instead of developing alternatives, it has made everyoneparticipate in learning in the same way, regardless of one's abilities, motivation or life situation. The true individual re-entry problem exists among the long-term unemployed, usually unskilled workers or people with low qualifications and among people returning to work after family leave, illness or some other reason for breaking the "normal" career-path. The typical alternative for these groups has been employment courses, organised also as degree studies in vocational adult

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[5] 22th August 1999

education centres or in VET schools. To improve re-entry for these groups is the real challenge for the Finnish society.

2. THE FINNISH RE-ENTRY TARGET GROUP

In the Finnish education system almost everybody has found her/his place in the society. Before the depression of 1990s young people who did not continue in upper secondary education found a job and could take a diploma-based education later in adult education. Most of the training, which has re-entry features, is part of the education system, e.g. the tenth grade and the guiding education. These training courses are arranged according to the same pattern, which makes the idea of selecting examples of good practice useless. Instead, it would be necessary to analyse their effectiveness as a part of the institutionalised education, not as examples of separate training courses. Having in mind the objects for Re-Enter project and especially the purpose of selecting examples of good practice, the Finnish target group was taken to be young people, who have finished compulsory education with poor qualifications or without a certificate (appr. 16 – 20 years old). The first group consisted of young people, who have a certificate of the comprehensive school, but because of low qualifications, low motivation, lack of social skills etc. have difficulties in finding a place in society. The dropouts in vocational education and training are in this group. The second group consisted of dropouts in comprehensive school (0.2% of comprehensive school leavers) and young people, who have finished the compulsory education, but for some reasons have not the leaving certificate.

2.1 Providers and initiatives to re-entry problem

The recognition of the problem of re-entry revealed also a problem of co-ordination of policies and governance. The Ministry of Education and Board of Education administer institutionalised education (comprehensive schools, vocational schools, polytechnics). Until the 1990s, re-entry was a minor problem for the administrators of formal VET. Instead, the problem of youth unemployment had to be faced by the Ministry of Labour: unemployed youngsters had to be offered a job or some kind of training. The authorities of employment offices have their own service (job placement or labour market training) for young people, who do not enter a vocational school. The aims of the Ministry of Labour are connected with employment policy, not with improvement of education. Still they offer a noticeably high amount of training services, which are not administered by the Ministry of Education. The Ministry of Trade and Industry is also involved in the re-entry problem through supportive measures for enterprises. The administrational overlap is strengthened by the ESF and other EU-support, which is channelled through different ministries. Most new Re-Enter–programmes would not exist without the ESF-support.

The rationale for choosing Finnish good practice examples was to enable comparison between differently organised Re-Enter schemes and their significance for low achieving youngsters. The main criterion was whether the programme was inside the formal system or not and secondly, do these programmes have a holistic approach and what is the significance of having this approach or not. Situated learning provided a lens to study the background theories these examples have on learning (social pedagogic) and working (a workplace/work based learning) and their relation to pedagogical issues in general forms the perspective to the meta-analysis. During 1996-1999, the initiatives to solve the re-entry problem can be classified into those inside the formal education system and the labour market policy, like Alternative vocational school (vaihtoehtoinen ammattikoulu – VAK), tenth grade, the guiding VET courses and the labour market policy programmes project-style programmes outside the formal system, like innovative workshops[6]

In the Re-Enter project context, the main initiative would be innovative workshops, usually funded by ESF and targeted to young unemployed people or those in danger of being socially excluded. They train comprehensive school leavers, who are uncertain about the choice of vocation and organise practical training for graduates from vocational schools. They are often seen as an alternative VET for dropouts. During the 1990s workshops increasingly developed from employment places for marginal people in weak positions into centres for providing extensive employment services for all kinds of young people (Virtanen, 1997). The aim of the workshops is to develop new methods and opportunities for young people with difficulties in attending normal classes or labour market. New ways of support, guiding and motivation are developed in the workshops. The aim is also to ease the access to further education, to gain experience of VET in practice and help to plan future studies. In 1998, the Ministry of Education gave 12,8 million marks to 137 innovative workshops and ESF support was 13 million marks. Each workshop got approximately 93 000 marks, which the workshop mainly spent on material, equipment and salaries of the personnel. In 1998, there were about 350 innovative workshops. Even if the workshops have managed to decrease youth unemployment significantly, the activities and the outcomes diverged locally. The development of new ways and methods of educating was one of the official objectives for the workshops, but their teaching and learning activities were only marginally followed up through systematic research.

3. RE-ENTER INITIATIVES AND SITUATED LEARNING IN THE FINNISH EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH

3.1 Research reports on Re-Enter initiatives

In the report of Virtanen (1997), ESF-funded innovative workshops, directed to the unemployed youth and those in danger of marginalisation, were evaluated according

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[6] Youth unemployment rate 8/99 was 42 000 persons

to their potential for producing positive influence and significant experiences for their participants. The planning and implementation of workshops was evaluated from the viewpoint of the partnership principle, outcomes and effectiveness. Co-operation between local labour market bodies was of fundamental importance. Effectiveness was evaluated statistically and information was collected from the project co-ordinators, interviews with young people and the project descriptions. The problems of workshops were firstly connected with the selection of youth, i.e. whether it was socially or production oriented. Secondly concerning the functioning of the local labour market and youth employment, the SMEs did not have a very central role in the workshop networks. Thirdly, the workshops lacked professional skills for project management, direction and evaluation. Still, the goals of participation and completion of workshops had been achieved. The Ministry of Labour statistics did not show essential difference between the employment of workshop youth and the control group. Differences were largely due to the labour district. The project co-ordinators found workshops to have a positive effect on the life situation of the young people, increasing self-esteem, employability and motivation to study. The report was made for ESF and therefore the labour market effects were the most important factor to evaluate and education or learning contents and contexts were of minor interest.

The report by Arminen (1996) on workshop activities in municipalities is an overview of innovative workshops and the material was gathered by sending questionnaires to 308 workshop leaders. The aim of the study was to gather basic information of workshop activities. Because workshop activities were a new phenomenon, no statistics were available before this report. There were 40 different occupations among leaders and 65 among workers of the workshops. Most commonly, personnel had a contract for a half-year. This policy of the Ministry of Labour effectively has prevented the development of the workshops in a long run. When the workers of innovative workshops change as often as participants, it is difficult to make any long term plans. They were often long-term unemployed themselves and would have needed guidance in the same affairs. Almost none of the workers had had training or guidance in their work, even if guidance of young people, who are in a danger of social exclusion, is demanding. The workers would have needed education in human relationships, supervision of work and in financial questions.

From 237 workshops only 102 stated that they have any educational functions, even it is not clear what these are in practice are. The main objective of the activity is to get jobs for the participants. The opportunity to study comprehensive school subjects was only in 19 workshops. In vocational studies educational functions were so heterogeneous that it is impossible draw any conclusions. Apprenticeship training was an uncommon activity. Education in the typical short-term courses may only have been one to two hours a week. Consequently, the educational function of innovative workshops is questionable, although in publicity they are compared to vocational education and training and considered even higher quality than vocational

schools. Arminen's brief report showed the need for research about the content, methods and contexts of learning in workshops.

In their study Stick and Carrot, Simo Aho and Juha Vehviläinen (1997) investigated the effects of a labour market policy reform that aims to activate the young unemployed and the youth that do not start secondary education. By reform they refer to the legislation for under 25 years olds without vocational qualification, who lose their right to the unemployment benefit, if they do not apply for vocational training or active labour policy programmes. At the same time, opportunities for education and apprenticeships were considerably increased. The data consisted of all under 20 year olds who were unemployed at the end of 1994 or 1995. By comparing the unemployment and education "careers" of the young unemployed before and after the reform, it was found out that the reform had a remarkable effect among those with a comprehensive school background: the share of the unemployed decreased by one third, and the share of those who started secondary education increased by 61%. The greatest change was noted among those who, prior the reform, had been most passive. Other observed effects were that unemployment ended earlier and participation into active labour market programmes increased considerably. In their comprehensive follow-up study Simo Aho and Hannu Koponen (Koponen, 2002) confirmed, that the activating measures have proved most important to the poorest achieving youngsters with little work experience. Their willingness to participate in and complete vocational education has constantly increased. The effects have been not so noticeable for the ones with vocational qualifications, upper secondary or higher education exams and/or work experience. The traditional trust in education seems to have grown among the new generation.

The 1997 study also clarified the reasons for staying out of secondary education. It was found that those remaining out of secondary education are a very heterogeneous group, and activating policies, supervisory help and supply of education should be directed according to differentiated needs. (cf. Virtanen, 1997). It seemed that those who do not succeed in comprehensive school are children from lower classes, whose parents do not value education highly and usually are unemployed. Therefore, children get used to unemployment at home, which in turn may affect the future plans. They may not have any support to educational choices, if any support at all. Despite these facts, in policy discourse it has become typical to individualise the reasons of young people for not entering into education and to consider Re-Enter only as a problem between the young and the education system. Many of the disengaged students would prefer the apprenticeship training in the first place, because work and earning money is important to them. Even if apprenticeship training were highly recommended in report, finding suitable jobs for this group would be difficult.

The later study (Koponen, 2002) confirms that despite the improved figures in youth employment and educational enrolments, polarisation among youth is increasing. Being male, from problematic region and having an early "career" with difficulties in school and employment, increases the risk of break off from education and employment in the future. The authors make comments, which are relevant for re-entry. Young people, who are in danger of becoming socially excluded, do not

actively use the services of employment agencies. A more differentiated guidance system could help the risk group. If there are no plans for the future, neither do vocational plans exist. Career guidance agencies, where guidance, support and opportunity to receive all kind of information take place would help these marginal groups. In their new role the career counsellors could have contacts with employers and negotiate training places and jobs for people in risk groups. However, even if the most effective help for young people is the recognition of the symptoms of marginalisation early and immediate individual career guidance, a danger of their stigmatisation remains. The gap between different groups in society may get deeper. Along with increasing parental choice in education, inequalities in education may also grow: good students would study in institutionalised education and good schools and disengaged students in second class schools or project style schemes.

Most evaluation reports have analysed innovative workshops from the labour market perspective. An example from a more individual perspective, closer in line with the mainstream educational policy is the report from Kari Nyyssölä (1999). He speaks about differences among disengaged youth, who would need different kinds of educational opportunities. The Finnish system would need a plan of "chains", which would recognise the individuality of young people's backgrounds, capabilities, interests and motivation. The chain would mean more intensive co-operation between employment, educational and social services authorities. Also the studies of Paakkunainen (1996) and Virtanen (1997) on opinions and experiences of the workshop participants were very optimistic: something new proved to be found for education and labour market policy. Participants saw the workshops to be totally different compared to classroom learning and theoretical studies. Innovative workshops were described as new social spaces for young people having problems in finding their place in society. They were spaces for calming down instead of pressure to adjust to the demands of the labour society. Researchers found that the participants did not consider the innovative workshops to be a way of earning money, nor just to spend time or keep young people in a store while waiting to enter the labour market. They speak about a bridge, where the outsiders of the learning society will find resources and self-confidence and establish social relationships. The bridge helps young people to face the hardness of the society. Researchers stress that establishing some social contacts and learning by doing are positive alternatives to unemployment: to be somebody and to be respected, even for half a year, is a significant experience for a person, who is in danger of becoming socially excluded.

4. DOMINANT APPROACHES TO SITUATED LEARNING IN FINNISH EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH[7]

It has belonged to the Finnish pedagogical tradition adult, vocational and folk school education to consider the collective, activeness and experience as fundamental for learning. However, along with the academisation and unification of education, it was

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[7] Based on report by Taru Tykkä

ignored in educational research, and has survived mainly in liberal adult education and youth work. (cf. Telemäki, 1998, Nieminen, 1995, Ojakangas, 1997) The recent expansion of research on experiential, informal, work-based and organisational learning has a different political and practical function and pays no attention to this tradition. In contemporary educational research learning is, even as "situated", analysed as knowledge creation, innovation, organisational and competence development, acquisition of expertise etc. However, the word 'situated learning' does not translate into Finnish and is therefore commonly replaced by other expressions.

All recent theories concerning learning in working life share one common aspect: they regard learning as a process of development and change. These studies present a conceptual framework, which contains for example Argyris and Schön's (1978) ideas of single and double loop learning, Senge's (1990) concept of 'generative learning' and Mezirow's (1995) theory of transformative learning. They also refer to Boud and Walker's (1984) and Brookfield's (1995) ideas of critical reflection. Ellström's (1996) distinction between adaptive learning and developmental learning is often described in these theories. In other words they picture learning as an intentional and situated phenomenon based on experiences and development.

The recent Finnish research on learning has centred on criticising learning in institutional and formal education. Educational policy has strongly favoured the shift towards studying and promoting informal learning outside formal education, especially in work contexts. (cf. Oppimisen ilo, 1997). One popular strand of research has studied expert learning. E.g. Anneli Eteläpelto and Paul Light (1999) argue that contextual approaches have considerable relevance in promoting understanding of the social nature of professional expertise. Radical 'situated learning' approaches tend to focus on how continuity works at the level of a given community or institution. The authors outline an integrative approach, which attempts to combine the analysis of contextual factors (arising from professionals' work settings and functional roles) with an understanding of components of design expertise arising from the individual's experiential history. Another popular approach to situated learning comes from the developmental work research school. Yrjö Engeström (1999) states that situated learning in communities of practice seldom happens in a stable, stagnant situation. Engeström refers to Lave and Wenger (1991), who suggested that we study the multiple embedded developmental cycles of communities of practice. The crucial task is to examine and explain connections between small-scale cycles of innovative problem solving and large-scale cycles of organisational and technological transformations and social movements.

Transformative learning can be approached through the theory of expansive learning (Engeström, 1987, Kauppi, 1988, 1992). It presents an example of an approach that is based on theoretical considerations of learning and development as well as on many work development projects at actual workplaces. The theory of expansive learning integrates human thinking and human doing into the collective enterprise where culture is reproduced and transformed. The direction for expansive transformation is built into the notion of zone of proximal development, which describes the distance between the present everyday actions of individuals and the

historically new form of the collective activity that can be generated as a solution to the inner contradictions in everyday practice. The direction of learning and development is neither completely based on experience and intuition nor on exact behavioural objectives, but on a contextual and substantial analysis of the historically evolving activity systems. The theories of expansive learning and transformation at the workplace are inextricably linked, because learning as a contextual phenomenon does not transform only the individual, but also the context.

Antti Kauppi (1993, 1998) has used Engeström's theory of expansive learning as a basis for his model of 'contextual learning'. He includes in his model all those ideas of learning, which emphasise it as a process embedded in an individual's different life contexts and practices. In many cases the connection between school and work becomes the arena for learning. The pace of change in qualification requirements is shifting the emphasis to general competencies in addition to specific competencies. To systematise the challenges facing vocational education Kauppi makes a distinction between reproductive and transformative learning. Reproductive learning aims at socialising to existing practices and learning the ways of thinking and acting that are in use. Transformative learning is directed more towards producing new practices and learners are faced with the need to create new ways of thinking and acting. Esa Poikela (1999) also uses the concept 'contextual learning'. The main themes of his study are workplace learning, the development of expertise, the creation of organisational competence and the effectiveness of education. According to research title, 'contextual learning' expresses in a nutshell the basic ideas of workplace learning, and expertise and core competency development in an organisation. In his study organisational learning and the creation of knowledge are described as learning through feedback, assessment and evaluation within an individual, collaborative, organisational and conceptual work context. The key question in producing core competencies is how the professional development and the processes of learning and knowledge creation can be linked together in the work organisation.

According to Jorma Enkenberg (1994), traditional apprenticeship represents a good example of situational learning. During the learning process the apprentices will go through repeatedly consequent cycles: they perceive how the master does the task, make the same together with the master, then do it alone and finally teach the subskill to someone else. In the framework of situated learning, activities are situated in the expert's or master's culture. The apprentice typically approaches the task in a holistic, contextualised manner. In modern society the worker should be able to plan, explore, reflect and evaluate his/her activities and practice. The worker should be able to perceive relevant aspects in the situation, of doing demanding jobs, to solve complex problems based on specific expertise, to work co-operatively and to take responsibility when necessary. The theory of cognitive apprenticeship has offered a solution to making expert knowledge-structure and culture transparent and conveyable for the students. The basic idea is to connect a traditional and successful way of learning manual skills with the results of modern cognitive theory. Both thinking and knowledge are exemplified and shown in their real context: learning is

mostly based on experiences, and the role of cognitive and meta-cognitive processes is stressed. (Enkenberg, 1994).

It is evident that the dominant approaches to situated learning are not for the losers or "low achievers" of learning or knowledge society. They are for becoming experts, efficient problem-solvers with social and meta-learning skills, who are committed to develop their own and organisational competitiveness. I will return to the paradox and political implications of applying these theories for discussing learning in the context of social exclusion in the final section.

5. SILTA, VAK AND JOB-IT: GOOD PRACTICE EXAMPLES[8]

5.1 Background of examples

The examples of good practice of Re-Enter programmes were chosen to represent new alternative programmes, which have been created since 1995 between the comprehensive school and secondary education. Since there is no research on best practice programmes, we gathered the material by interviewing the leaders of the programmes. The three examples are: one tenth grade in the city of Kuopio, one youth workshop organised by three big cities in Southern Finland and one Alternative Vocational School located in the city of Jyväskylä. Only the last gives a diploma of VET, while tenth grade education gives improved marks in a certificate of comprehensive school. The youth workshop does not give formal qualifications.

5.1.1 SILTA (BRIDGE) - A bridge to education and the labour market[9]

SILTA started in 1995 as an alternative tenth grade class of the comprehensive school in Kuopio (city with 90.000 inhabitants in eastern Finland). It is located in a converted cow-house in an open doors system: visitors are welcome whenever they want to come and also parents can go there. SILTA has its own budget and can make decisions independently. Until 1998 it was funded by the EU and the National Board of Education, but since then through the municipal school budget. The steering group members are from the school administration, a social work assistant and a representative of youth workers. There are a lot of more pupils wanting to attend SILTA, but 15 are chosen annually. All applicants for the SILTA-project are interviewed. Those who are in greatest need of alternative study methods and whose school report is poor, are selected. Whilst one criterion is that the young should be motivated to study in the tenth grade, the interview functions as a first motivation for SILTA studies and gives detailed information for the special education teacher. The authorities, which have had contacts with young people, are also heard in order to make right selection. There have been a special education teacher and a part-time social worker working together, but because of economic cutbacks later only the special teacher. Pupils in SILTA class share the regular benefits with other

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[8] Based on report by Taru Tykkä and Kristiina Laiho
[9] Material gathered by interviewing Mika Kuitunen and by referring to Kuitunen and Miettinen, 1998.

comprehensive schools pupils, for example books, food and health care services are free of charge.

The target group is comprehensive school leavers who have searched for smaller groups , the support of a group and work-based learning. Often they have bad school experiences and teachers call them "school allergic" (Kuitunen and Miettinen, 1998). Despite its problematic connotations, the word "school allergy" has become popular from the research of Mikko Takala (1992) on young people having difficulties with learning and school. He used it for social deprivation to explain why certain individuals at school become withdrawn or disruptive and thus are disadvantaged in the labour market. They had a negative attitude to both school and education and they tended to blame on themselves theproblems they had. Takala suggested that school should be changed if "school allergic" youngsters are to be integrated in the society.

There is a national curriculum for the tenth grade, but every school can individualise it. It is possible to improve the marks on a school report, become acquainted with working life and to get information on the opportunities at secondary education. In Kuopio, one aim is to prevent social exclusion, where exclusion from vocational education and training is a part. A VET diploma helps young people's integration into working life and to the society. The background theory in the SILTA project is social pedagogy as described by Juha Hämäläinen (1996), who takes the German social pedagogy as his starting point. The teachers explained they had thoughts and means of social pedagogy before they even knew it as a theory. They had various experiments and created the work model by learning by doing. According to theory social problems are conceived in the context of learning and pedagogy. To help young person with social problems is equal with supporting her/his human growth and learning process.

The principles of SILTA are the responsibility of the students for their own learning, student participation in decision making, social (collective) activities and networking with environment. In the beginning of the school year the students get more guidance and help but by degrees the students have to take more and more responsibility. To study in a vocational school demands that the students can make choices concerning the selection of courses and making the study plan for all the three years. Students get a certain sum of money for the whole year and have to plan how to use it to increase the feeling of safety and comfort. Students also take part in developing the learning methods, both by common meetings, planning discussions and carrying out the individual study plan. Teamwork, camps and being a member of a workplace community are chances for practising social skills. The teachers find it impossible to work without information from parents, friends and authorities. They have created a well-functioning network, which consists of members of the police, social work, "drug station", health care, youth work and also the employees of training places.

A crucial pedagogical instrument in SILTA is HOPS (Individual syllabi), a means of planning learning, but also of reconstructing a life course and self-concept of the student. HOPS is the basis for learning and counselling. It gives the teacher

basic information on the student and the student is committed and motivated through the HOPS discussions. HOPS also functions as an assessment tool: the contract is checked and revised during the year. In the beginning, the students usually have low expectations and objectives and it is necessary to revise the individual syllabi. It gives the student free choice in planning the year: the student can choose the training places and the ways of learning (theory or practice, group or individual learning). Another pedagogical instrument is the intensive course. The year is divided into five two week learning periods, four to five week training periods (three days in a workplace and two days in school) and four five day camps. The school days consist of three two-hour lessons, which are not obligatory, if he/she does something else considered as learning. There are exams, essays, project work, visits and work-base learning in real workplaces as in vocational schools. Students are taught learning techniques and practices to make references, because teachers stress the importance of learning how to learn for any area of study.

A third pedagogical instrument is work-based learning. All training periods are based on national curriculum, but in SILTA subject tasks are adjusted to the work-based learning. (cf. Enquist-Onttonen, 1998) Before the workplace period, students are given a brief course in how to get a job and usually they find it themselves, mainly in public organisations or SME´s (hairdressers, stores, cafes, restaurants, hotels and advertising agencies). Every student should have a mentor at the workplace. Teacher and mentor discuss the rules of the workplace and school and the criteria for the assessment, which is done together. The mentors have a short introductory course and a guidebook and the teacher visits the workplace once a week in order to guide the student and the mentor. The mentor should see the student primarily as a learner, not as a worker (cf. Kurhila, 1998). Students find the work-based learning periods challenging and some would rather stay at school. Teachers stress the advantages of work-based learning, because the young have to learn the rules of working life, because these periods make them familiar with several tasks and occupations and because they keep students as active members in society. The fourth pedagogical instrument is adventures, used in the four camps during the year. To trust oneself, to be responsible for oneself and the whole group and to develop interaction abilities are seen to be effectively learned by adventures. The idea of adventure is to create new thinking processes by different tasks the students must do during the camp, which could be transferred to comparable situations outside the camp. (cf. Telemäki, 1998).

The fifth pedagogical instrument is networking and co-operation with parents. The whole life situation of the young person is the target of the project. Often there are problems between the young person and his/her parents. Teachers may visit the student's homes and arrange discussion evenings for parents at school with a family therapist. Parents have learned ways of handling problem situations with their child and they have shared their feelings with other parents. Through participating in the group a parent changes her/his way of approaching the problems, which in turn makes the young person change her/his attitudes and behaviour. Students in the SILTA class have often several authority contacts. In SILTA the aim is to have one person to take the responsibility of the young person's affairs so that s/he does not

have to have appointments with many authorities. To build a well functioning and reliable network in Kuopio has taken some years. Teachers have during the five-year period created a well functioning network. The awareness of the history of the development of the re-entry schemes helps them to understand the needs of students.

After two years of SILTA, 68% of the students were studying, 27% had found another place in a vocational school or they have attended a youth workshop, only 5% did not get a place to study. The latest activity of the SILTA is to give marks to the participants of youth workshops. Otherwise they would have the same school report after finishing the workshop period. The aim of the teachers in the "KUOPIO model" is to widen this practice to other youth workshops in Eastern Finland. The project workers stress that someone who has attended one of the alternative projects is not given a primary chance to attend another. It is not intended that the youngsters will get into the career of project life. Each project should be so effective that the young person can attend vocational education and training or find a job.

Considering the SILTA class as a response to re-entry as an *individual* problem, it starts by clarifying a young person's own needs, learning barriers and social problems. Every student is interviewed and the teacher makes an individual study plan with every student. The student is made responsible for her/his studies and s/he gets a feeling of belonging to a group. The individual study plan (HOPS) functions as a means for both planning the learning and serves as a means of assessment. Furthermore, the HOPS makes learning objective-oriented, because every student evaluates his/her learning several times during the year. It shows the student the positive steps, but learning needs for the future as well. The teacher tries to make the learner aware of his/her learning style and help to plan the studies accordingly. Students are regarded as independent learners, who need others and should help others in their development as learners. Discussions, adventure activities and work with the parents aim to improve the life management skills of the learners. All these skills are effectively learnt by work-based learning at school with the small group of learners, in adventure activities by succeeding in something which earlier has been frightening or shaming and by on the job learning with the help of the mentor. From the *institutional* perspective, SILTA project provides an alternative for improving the school-leaving certificate by work-based learning. A template of learning methods is introduced to the learners with the aim of helping them to learn to learn. Even if some students would rather stay at school, everyone is forced to get experience from several workplaces. Personal guidance is made possible through the HOPS, the mentor and in school and workplace communities.

From the *labour market and civil societal* perspective, the SILTA project indicates successful transition from comprehensive to further education and work. Most of the students continue their studies, because their certificate is good enough to apply for secondary education. Their self-reliance has grown and they trust their abilities to learn. The SILTA teachers have active contacts on local community level and their work has been recognised at a national level (NBE), too.

5.1.2 Alternative Vocational School – VAK

The Alternative Vocational School project started in March 1995 in the Youth Workshop (Nuorisoverstas) in Jyväskylä in collaboration with the Special Vocational Education Centre Kuhankoski. The career training foundation Tekevä and the Special Vocational Centre Kuhankoski administered VAK, which was funded by the ESF. VAK is a labour market policy programme and the young people (apprentices) receive a subsidy paid by the employment authorities. The purpose of VAK is to prevent social exclusion of young people. Exclusion from education often includes learning difficulties, lack of motivation and behavioural problems in school, and inability to integrate into the culture and relationships of the school community. VAK is a socio-pedagogical and occupational programme for those, who have neither integrated into a normal vocational school system nor into working life. It is meant for unqualified youngsters between 17-25 years, who are at the risk of being excluded from the educational system, labour market and society. They are often dropouts, ex-offenders and hard to educate. Students of VAK are selected on application individually, and a representative of the school and the local authorities interviews them. Before the final selection the applicant has a one-month training period in the school.

The main pedagogical principles of the VAK are work-based learning, a holistic view of the individual and flexibility. In VAK learning is based on on-the-job training, individual curriculum and flexible training methods. Students work in the departments of the career training foundation Tekevä and during the training period in private enterprises. VAK also offers students opportunities for international training. Students can specialise in certain professional fields: textiles (dressmaker), wood (joinery/carpentry), painting and decoration, construction, car mechanics and metal. VAK co-operates with vocational institutes and they exchange knowledge, training and expertise with each other. It also works in close association with the authorities of the District of Labour in Central Finland and local enterprises. Vocational training takes 1.5 - 3 years, in accordance with student's individual needs and capacities. The aim is to give student basic skills for the chosen occupation and qualifications for advanced training or the labour market, also to improve the learning strategies and life control skills.

The teaching and learning methods in VAK are "learning by doing", consideration of student as an individual and collaboration. Every student frames an individual curriculum and learning plan. Assessment and feedback is integrated in work situations and students also do self-evaluations. In VAK student-assignments are based on real customer orders: in *Garage* students repair cars, in the Construction department they renovate old buildings etc. They are motivated by their work being necessary and useful for the customers. Theoretical knowledge is learned and taught in the process of the work. Since every student has his/her own task, their pace of work and learning is also different and more independent than in normal vocational schools. The curriculum of VAK consists of different subjects, but they are integrated to work.

The perspective of VAK to re-entry is primarily *individual*, but also supports *social coherence* and *education providers*. Membership in the VAK community raises individual self-esteem and gives feeling of togetherness. Students and teachers form a community where they work in close association. Students do not learn only work skills and knowledge, but also 'tacit knowledge', beliefs, values and jargon used by the experts. The transfer of skills is also easier, when they are learnt and used in practice. Students are getting more responsibility when their skills and competencies develop. During the training period students' attitudes towards theoretical knowledge change positively, when they understand its usefulness. VAK is a socio-pedagogical programme, which aims at preventing social problems, which are considered from the perspective of human growth and learning. Students are participating in decision-making and they are given responsibility for their own actions. The relationships between students and teachers are confidential and democratic, and students can give feedback to their teachers. In VAK working routines and schedules give regularity to students lives, but also for understanding the meaning of spare time for developing personal and social skills: VAK organises football tournaments etc. Teachers and other personnel meet every week to discuss experiences and problems which have occurred and try to solve them together. Students are also getting free mental and physical health care services as well as student counselling and vocational guidance.

In the beginning VAK was based on Jean Bay´s pedagogy of consequences. According to Bay, the individual is always measured by his/her actions and should be made responsible by showing him/her the consequences of his/her actions. Later the conceptual framework has become closer to social pedagogy. In the German discussion the concept has been used in several connections: it has referred to an occupational field, an area of education and theory of social work, a pedagogical movement, a tradition of pedagogical discussion, principles of pedagogical activity in the society and an area of research, where connections between pedagogy and social work have been emphasised. (Hämäläinen, 1996.) It has also been influenced by ideas of productive learning, where the focus is on the opportunities offered by young people's environment. This theory has common features with e.g. Dewey's and Freinet's theories of learning, which emphasise young person´s motivation to learn, self-development and responsibility for his/her own life. The aim is to develop learning environments, which would strengthen his/her life management skills. In VAK learning is seen as an aspect of physical and practical activity. Young person is a member of a community, where s/he learns skills and knowledge with an experienced worker.

5.1.3 TIEKKIS-TYÖKKIS (Job-IT, A youth workshop)

Job-IT (TT) is a youth workshop, which offers half-year traineeships to young people lacking vocational education in information technology. It was chosen as one of the best practice examples in the national development project of the National Board of Education under the theme year of Lifelong Learning (Suurla and

Markkula, 1998). The project started in 1997 in Helsinki and today it consists of three youth workshops in the cities of Helsinki, Vantaa and Espoo. They are located near each other, which makes it possible that the youngsters can take part in another workshop than s/he is chosen for. In addition to cities, the Finnish Information Processing Association and the University of Helsinki (Vantaa Institute of Continuing Education) are partners in the project, which gets funding from the ESF. The applicants must be under 25 years, majority do not have work experience, some have dropped out of vocational school and some have been too keen on computers to want a job or study place. The project manager or/and adviser chooses participants after an interview, where their interests, work experience, skills and motivation are investigated. Sometimes the young have excellent skills in computer technology, but no interest to get formal qualifications. Some applicants have not sought for a job, some may have difficult life situation preventing them to work or study.

The pedagogical principle of Job-IT is to bring youngsters into meaningful activity by the workshop, which include:
- use of modern information technology to residents of the metropolitan area and non-commercial bodies
- repair and maintenance of IT equipment
- assistance to educational institutes in the installation and maintenance of equipment and networks
- guidance for personnel of educational institutions in basic IT issues
- multimedia and www applications to order

Students study six months in four groups according to their request. There is also exchange between the groups to support learning and give opportunities to widen the young person's repertoire of skills. After a short introductory period students will enter actual workshop activity. The four groups consist of multimedia, which includes design of www-pages and creation of multimedia apps, application programmes, layout and publication, LAN-support and programming and repairing, building, upgrading and installation.

The main principle of the Job-IT is to be a workplace. It makes a contract with the participants, who work part of the time in real workplaces. Many have been employed by their workplace. TT has good contacts with employers in the city and they get inquiries on new and capable workers. Because TT is a workplace, the rules of working life should be acquired. Workers of the TT state that it is not possible to get a job or access in secondary education, if the student fails to come to work on time or if s/he cannot manage the work tasks or cannot participate in and respect the group. To make participants familiar with working life means that their positive resources are strengthened. The adviser states that the most effective way to progress is to have supportive discussions when the young expresses motivation or when s/he is unable to express what s/he wants to do. Their work ideology is that the participants have obligatory tasks during the day and it is not possible to do only enjoyable and easy things. Another pedagogical principle is that the young take care of all the tasks at the centre. The idea that those who already know and can work with computer technology should teach others is sometimes put into practice. The contacts with customers and employers require social skills and the young must

know his/her concrete working skills at each moment, because in ICT employers often want exact knowledge of the skills the participants.

Career training course, exhibitions, visits to vocational schools and workplaces are part of Job-IT activities. Job-IT has also created a network, which helps participants in finding workplace or a permanent job. Job-IT has a good reputation, e.g. it has built for most of the schools in Helsinki their internet cable network. Apprenticeship training has proved to be of great interest to participants, but arranging of an apprenticeship needs a lot of work and time. In the field of ICT, employers are typically SMEs, the big ones have no interest in apprenticeship. Especially if the enterprise is working in a special area in computer technology, they are keen to have a young person with basic skills and high motivation. They would rather teach her/him the tasks and the programmes than employ someone with formal qualifications. Job-IT also co-operates with child welfare institutions. Some participants are still living in children's home and often need special help.

Between February 1997 and end of October 1998 there were 142 participants (23 women), from whom 74 came from comprehensive school, 45 from upper secondary education and 23 from vocational school. From these 43 got a job or apprenticeship, 20 continued in education and 54 were not reached for the evaluation. Later over 50% of the participants have got a job and many an apprenticeship contract. Whilst apprenticeship training is developed all the time and a great number of the participants have succeeded in getting a contract, the greatest problem for TT is that the tutors usually have only a half a year contract. The changes make planning and development difficult. The adviser states that the work culture of the Job-IT may be disturbed if the newcomers do not internalise its ideas. The advisers have to concentrate on counselling and advising the participants and they do not have time for customer service, although they bring real work tasks. Job-IT would like to widen the customer service, but they have to be careful not to make unrealistic promises, because the quality of products and services has to be perfect to get a good reputation. Since the youth unemployment is decreasing the applicants to the Job-IT are less qualified and have more problems and threatened by social exclusion. The workers see that they do not have capacity for counselling and support: Job-IT functions as a workplace and pedagogical and supportive action may not be its main objectives. According to interviews, pedagogical factors are already within the activity, but not recognised as such nor systematically developed. The new project leader considers pedagogy more important and they have started to development of HOPS for students.

Considering Job-IT from the *individual* perspective, it mainly socialises the young in the world of work. Strong emphasis is also on the life management skills. Computer technology skills are trained in authentic situations, but a systematic support and counselling is missing. The adviser of the project states that the tutors do not have pedagogical qualifications to support and counsel, which often happens in informal situations. The personnel try to teach the young person so well that they are able to offer appropriate alternatives. By activating the participants (regular life, social contacts, earning money) they believe that they find positive experiences and

decisions for the future. The power of money is also important, because the activity, which previously may have been a hobby, now raises the young person's self-confidence and independence. Newcomers are allowed to do what they can or want and participants' abilities are respected and trusted. There are constantly situations for self-evaluation with customers, employers, tutors and other participants. From the perspective of *education providers*, Job-IT may be a constructive alternative for young enthusiasts in ICT, who may not be interested in getting formal qualifications, finding a job or attending VET school. It can offer opportunities to employment and formal qualifications, while they can continue activities they fancy, like programming, playing games, chatting and which are turned into acceptable and useful form. Developing the curriculum and assessment remain the challenges for the Job-IT.

Also from the *labour market and civil societal* perspective, the main objective of the Job-IT is socialisation into the world of work. The needs of the local community are responded and the co-operation developed constantly. Computer equipment is modern, which promotes the opportunities of the participants to get a job or an apprenticeship. They get high qualifications in computer technology, which the small enterprises have recognised. Often the crucial factor for employment is to raise the youngsters' social skills.

6. THE POLITICAL AND PEDAGOGICAL NATURE OF THE GOOD PRACTICE EXAMPLES

6.1 The novelty of Re-Enter initiatives

The political, economic and cultural embeddedness of Re-Enter initiatives has to be understood, when we evaluate the goodness of different solutions for seemingly similar pedagogical principles in different countries. Historicisation of their novelty may sensitise us to their implicit and unintended aspects. In most European countries the ideas of learning on the job, participation of people of different age, experience and life-situation at educational and work-sites have a long tradition. However, the possibilities to create educational and work collectives, who are able and willing to take the responsibility for the occupational growth processes, have been historically transforming.

The problem of youngsters not completing their compulsory education or not proceeding into continuing education or work has been marginal in Finland. Instead, re-entry to education and employment has been and still is a severe problem for adults, especially since the recession and mass unemployment of the 1990s. The informal ways of learning may still have a crucial meaning in structuring peoples skills and occupational identity, but being informal they treat people very differently depending on their position in the total division of work and on the phase of their life. The preference to cope with problem groups inside schoolish forms of VET can be understood in relation to its traditional function as the social recognition and defence of all work as occupational. The schoolish VET in different branches of

industry was often defined by the network of civil servants in the branch ministry and big employers in the branch. The solutions were compromises between the political demands of promoting national industry, the demands of employers to gain profits and the workers´ defence on ownership of their occupational skills and competences. (Heikkinen, 1995, Heikkinen et al, 1999, 2001)

Principles of holistic and work-based learning have a long history in the schoolish VET. Since the establishment of VET institutes for workers, farmers and small entrepreneurs in different branches of industry in the 19th century, the main focus was on work-based learning, in organising learning in authentic environments and workshops. The Finnish concept of "school" may not correspond to expressions in German or English. It is embedded in the political and cultural tradition and programmes of the constitution of the Finnish nation-state. The ideals of popular democracy, self-governance, and reciprocity in social and economic life were interconnected at national, collective and individual levels. The VET pedagogy was strongly influenced by the exemplary nature of work in independent small farm or craft, both for men and women. This was the major difference to VET for foremen and professionals, where theoretical and technological learning was crucial. In the technical sector during the period of the 1910s-1930s, Finnish VET was labelled by deep political confrontations between labour movement and big industrial employers. Initiatives to organise industry-led VET was restricted to the production of a politically reliable core work force and workers considered apprenticeship as controlling and exploiting them. Another distinction was the marginality of crafts or small enterprises in Finnish industry: they did not form any economical or political force, which could direct the development of VET. Therefore, state-led schoolish system with reliable, but politically neutral teachers was economically and politically attractive and acceptable alternative for both central unions of industrial workers and employers. In all branches, struggle for autonomy and independence in the turn of 20th century promoted establishment of state-led or supported schoolish forms of VET, where civil servants in branch ministries conceived themselves as promoters of national industry and schools and teachers as proponents of occupationalisation of work. (Heikkinen, 1995, Heikkinen et al, 1999)

The middle-class project of modernisation with its social-democratic principles of equality of opportunity started to take over in all sectors of society and all forms of education since the 1960s. The preference of encyclopaedic and technological education expanded from creation of the comprehensive school to gathering all VET under one board in Ministry of Education. Whilst the teachers had previously aimed at simulating real work-processes and productive work in school workshops, at serving customers etc., the unifying, standardising and centralising reform at upper secondary since the 1980s implied a rapid erosion of industrial and occupational orientation in schools. Since participation of workers had been marginal in development of VET, which was mainly perceived from the perspective of the leading industrial employers, labour unions and parties supported unifying reforms. The proponents – planners and teachers - of occupationally oriented VET created as a compromise the concept of training occupation, which was defined by school and

aimed at student-centred occupational identity formation. The reforms in 1990s further enforced the integration of vocational to general education system, stressing the importance of theoretical and technological studies and the academic qualifications of teachers. Still, the struggle about theoretical and technological versus practical and activity-oriented learning has continued inside institutes.

The recent debates on Re-Enter measures reflect more fundamental controversies inside and between different sectors of governance and social and political projects. Under the name of continuing education Re-Enter has been an issue since the late 19th century. It has dealt with ideological and political demarcations inside administration, between the public and private sector and between different forms of education. The problem of disadvantaged or disengaged youth has been addressed and recognised through competing institutional and professional paradigms of individuality versus collectiveness, occupation/employment versus citizenship, self-fulfilment versus social responsibility. The Finnish Re-Enter examples can be placed politically and educationally in historical strands. (cf. Heikkinen, 1995, Heikkinen et al, 1999, Nieminen, 1995)

Firstly, the problem of exclusion from working life or continuing education, has since the end of 19th century been tackled inside general or comprehensive education by prolonging compulsory education for citizenship. The SILTA as additional classes of comprehensive school represents continuity inside general education. The problem is that classes are additional to the teachers as well. They have taken the work if nothing else has been available. There has usually been no co-ordinating teacher, but different teachers in every study subject, which has meant the same as to revise the ninth grade (Jahnukainen, 1998, p.8-9). The *second way* of addressing the problem of youngsters with no plans for future or no qualifications required in starting vocational studies, emerged inside the vocational form of education. The strategy has been to establish prevocational classes or programmes inside VET institutes. Severe debates took place in the 1920s political and economic crisis, continued after the World War II, about the nature of the last years of compulsory education. The proponents of VET did not succeed in defining VET as an alternative for finishing compulsory education, but they fended off the attempt to create vocationally oriented classes in the comprehensive, which could substitute initial VET in some branches. The issue became acute again in the 1970s in preparing unifying reforms for upper secondary, but no changes really happened. The case Alternative Vocational School inside the VET system is representing this line of thought. Both traditions have similarities in their pedagogy. Holistic and social learning approaches have been strong both in the tradition of VET at lower stages and in education for citizenship (primary school). The focus on learning differs, however: in comprehensive education, the focus is on meaningful experiences and promoting positive self-image and self-reliance, while in VET the focus is on acquisition of a set of skills and gaining self-confidence in searching for job and regular work. Both share the challenge of integrating their activities with the work-sites, communities or families and therefore of creating educationally supportive holistic learning environments and communities.

A *third* strand of Re-Enter measures originates from social policy. Since the establishment of a public system for social services in 1920s, there have been debates about the nature and scope of social work, both in relation to VET and to employment policy. The attempts to organise counselling and social care for potentially excluded youngsters have remained marginal and fragmentary. Neither the legalistic self-image of civil servants, nor the family orientation of the practical social work has promoted interest in vocational education. Furthermore, the development of rather exhaustive system of special education, health care, psychological and social support at secondary level, also in VET schools, made the need of other social services superfluous since the 1970s. Paradoxically, along with the decrease in these services during the economic recession and youth-unemployment, projects like SILTA and especially VAK, strongly built on the special education tradition. However, political efforts have mainly targeted to strengthening the role of social work in re-entry activities.

The *fourth* historical strand of Re-Enter initiatives comes from employment policy: the struggle between social welfare and VET system, about integration of career guidance, man-power planning and employment training ended in the 1950s: employment training belongs to the Ministry of Labour and its regional and local offices. The *fifth* strand in development of Re-Enter measures is youth work/education (Jugendarbeit), promoting young peoples growth in leisure time, in the context of youth cultures and life-styles. Such activities expanded along with the active construction of the welfare state since the 1970s, when the sector of youth services was created in municipalities. However, during the recession there was a dramatic reduction in youth work, indicated in the cutting down of study programmes for youth workers/educators in universities. In the Job-IT workshop the traditions of employment policy and youth work are both present, slightly also the VET tradition. It is locally run as part of municipal youth work, but funded and controlled by ministries of labour and education. Many workers in the youth workshops are unemployed, who have no pedagogical or even occupational expertise. However, compared to other Re-Enter initiatives, the gap between youth workshops and work-sites has been smaller. In the case of Job-IT, this is also due to the nature of the IT field itself, because it employs mainly young men, often for irregular periods, and because the employed often identify with their "IT culture" than with any occupational group.

During recent years, the EU support has been a pulling factor towards initiating Re-Enter type measures in Europe, in countries like UK and Belgium also continuing previous traditions. Another factor has been the push from trans-nationalising economy and work-organisations, which have less tolerance and flexibility towards individuals, who do not fulfil their standards of productive and innovative employees. Globalisation, informationalisation and network economy has accelerated the integration of Europe into a competitive economic area for companies: the goals and aims of mainstream education in Europe are increasingly converging into promotion of life long learning in the knowledge-based economy and society. They centre on flexibility, mobility and transferability of European

workforce, expansion of ICT, internationalisation, entrepreneurship, individualisation and sociability. Translated into education they mean language skills, mathematical, scientific and technological skills, social skills, self-directedness and risk-taking. (e.g. Memorandum, 2000, NBE, 2001).

The trans-national pulling and pushing impacts need cultural translation into national Re-Enter initiatives. (cf. Julkunen, 2001) E.g. in Germany the growing global economic competition and political unification has accelerated pressure to reduce the labour costs of the male Facharbeiter, to push women into employment and to fill the positions in potentially growing low wage service work. The problem is linked to employing the second generation of immigrant workers, east-German workers and a great number of foreign job seekers. The Re-Enter programmes may be considered as buffers for saving the dual system of VET and the established order of occupations. In Portugal and Greece the collapse of totalitarian and military regimes, which prolonged the maintenance of indigenous employment and family structures, was combined to the pull from EU funding to industrialisation and modernisation and the push from rapid structural change from rural and agricultural and informal to urbanised, industrial and formal work. The Re-Enter programmes may be seen as political and educational instruments for coping with the rising social and educational expectations of young people and women and with the cultural and economic tensions in urbanising and post-modernising ways of life. In the Nordic countries Sweden has been reluctant towards, Norway in marginal need of Re-Enter type activities and Denmark has been able to build on its traditions of popular education, also in VET, e.g. through production schools. In Finland, joining the EU during the worst years of economic recession and unemployment, the neo-liberalist shift towards reduction of welfare costs, privatisation, individualisation and active social and employment policy enforced a wild establishment of hundreds of Re-Enter type activities, supported by the ESF during 1996-1999. At the same time, Re-Enter measures show the continuing trust of Nordic societies in education as a solution for social and economical problems.

6.2 The "Re-Enter pedagogy"

The dominant discourses of learning seem to have minor impact on the Finnish Re-Enter initiatives. Rather they represent the experiential tradition of social pedagogy (SILTA and VAK) and informal cultures of workplace learning (Job-IT). In the Finnish mainstream education, social pedagogy became almost forgotten during the 1980s. Along with the increasing problems of unemployment and social exclusion, new interest in social pedagogy emerged especially among youth educators and social workers. E.g. Hämäläinen (1996) has re-advocated the German tradition into the Finnish education with disengaged young learners and social work practice (community work). Likewise in situated learning (Lave and Wenger, 1991), social pedagogy examines learning in an individual, social and cultural context. Both regard learning as a social process, which cannot only be reduced into a didactic process. Individuality is the starting point, which means that learning must include possibilities to reflect, which is a process producing new thinking and increasing

responsibility of own learning process, which in turn promotes self-responsibility of the young person's whole life situation. Both SILTA and VAK take as a starting point the learner's social background and culture. This holistic approach belongs to both social pedagogy and situated learning. Still, there is a different insight into the learning process. Lave and Wenger (p. 43) emphasise the significance of shifting the analytic focus from the individual as learner to learning as participation in social world, and from the concept of cognitive process to the more-encompassing view of social practice. In social pedagogical approach the quality of learning process is the object of teacher's work, while in situated learning approach learning is the way of individual existence in the social world with others. According to social pedagogy learning is conditioned by the structuring of pedagogy and its aims by pedagogical goals, while in situated learning they are parts of social practice itself.

In social pedagogy educational is not separated from other spheres of life: leisure time or being with friends are good opportunities for learning. Learning in groups is the centre of education. In SILTA the community is not only related to school, but also to the camps. In Lave & Wenger's concept of community of practice, tutors, teachers and others involved in the learning process are learning equally with the student and learners are allowed to develop from novice to expert. In SILTA the greatest challenges were in mentoring and workplace learning. It was not easy to engage workers at the workplace to support and give space to the learner's needs and to include counselling in mentoring. Concerns about access to the community of work practice were hardly raised. Whilst students in SILTA had five training periods at different workplaces, there was too little time to be engaged in a community. On the contrary, teachers and students at school were forming a community. Newcomers were accepted with their different needs and personalities. The use of group as learning method created intensive relationships inside SILTA. The help from others and the feeling of togetherness made the community a safety net for its members. Such feeling was absent during the training periods. As to VAK project, the workplace environment was included in the learning activity itself.

The culture of Job-IT was based on learning by doing, but with no pedagogical ideology in the background. The staff refused to see themselves as pedagogues, although in the interview they reflected their action in pedagogical vocabulary. As an authentic work based learning environment Job-IT showed features of situated learning. Even if the personnel on Job-IT knew the whole life situation of the young, they did not actively work with the whole person. There aim was socialisation into the world of work and getting the participants employed or to study. A holistic approach may be superfluous, as long as the Job-IT successfully reaches its targets and the outcomes are good and the participants do not have serious social problems. Full participation in workplaces was ensured, because highly motivated youngsters are the best small enterprises can get. Enterprises were motivated to give guidance and freedom, because they need full members with skills and willingness to collaboration. Job-IT had the same idea: newcomers take gradually more and more responsibility and often teach others, who have already worked in the Job-IT. The

unwritten rule that participants care for each other's well being also resembles the idea of learning community centred on practice.

According to the Finnish examples, good practices always require educators with pedagogical commitment, providing stable and coherent basis for youngsters´ personal growth. The young expect emotional and social support, caring, safe and demanding relations to adults and peers, who take them seriously. They need occupation-specific, concrete tasks and responsibilities (authentic, demanding, but accomplishable) and tailored support in their learning difficulties of such fundamental skills like reading, writing and mathematics. They need practical guidance in managing their life, concrete and positive experiences from their skills – in baking, repairing a car, making a chair – being valued and shared by an occupational community or community of livelihood. The key elements in successful Re-Enter initiative are safe, tolerant and permitting atmosphere, which is at the same time normative, disciplining and parenting - e.g. in requiring to follow rules and to accomplish promises and tasks. The successful Re-Enter measure is continuing the parenting started in comprehensive school, since the socially threatened youngsters usually have little support from their parents (often parents means only the mother). Educators serve as parents and take the responsibility of educating the young; in the future possibly also by collaborating with the (single) parents.

6.3 The future: inside or outside the mainstream

Political and institutional solutions are crucial for pedagogical and didactic approaches to Re-Enter problems, as Lave and Wenger (p. 64) also have pointed out. The Finnish good practice examples represent different solutions. One is part of a comprehensive school, the second gives vocational qualifications and the third is outside educational system. The Finnish education system has been comprehensive and almost every young person has continued her/his studies in secondary education after the compulsory education. The problem is not to get youngsters engaged in learning, but to provide alternatives to be engaged for students who dislike the mainstream teaching and learning culture. The examples in the formal system are indicative on its capacity to overcome the deficiencies in teaching and learning methods, e.g. through work-based Re-Enter activities.

The Ministry of Education has calculated that since the youth unemployment has decreased and learning opportunities expanded, there is no need for so many workshops anymore. The argument shows the nature of the workshops as active labour market policy instead of education policy. Policy makers and authorities at municipality level have argued that innovative workshops are meant to be projects and there is an end in the activity as well. New ESF supported three-year experiments[10] started in 28 vocational schools year 1999. In experiments, the workshop is part of a vocational school. The students can study for vocational examination or take some courses in a workshop. The aim of activities is to decrease

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[10] Helsingin Sanomat 24th of March 1999

dropout and give students an opportunity to rethink their future. Instead of breaking off vocational studies the student can move to workshop, where s/he can study as long as s/he wants. Small class size, extra guidance and opportunity to engage in work-based education are the benefits compared to ordinary studies in vocational school.

A more substantial impact from the Re-Enter experiment may be the closing of different institutional and professional paradigms, which may show as new ways of networking and collaboration between special general, vocational and special education and social and youth work. The concept of intermediate education has been launched, which shows a need and a will to reconstruct the system. Additional classes in the comprehensive, youth workshops and alternative vocational schools could have their framework in special education, if they were given this status. This would, however, demand resources for special classes with special teachers and fewer students than in ordinary class. During the last year, the ministry of education has specified its aims both in expanding VET in apprenticeship form and increasing prevocational education in VET schools. The varieties of corrective measures are probably moving into the regular education system. VET schools and teachers are responsible for initial and intermediate VET, but supported in different ways by special educators, youth and social workers. A major governmental ESF supported project for developing teacher education ("teachers year 2010", Luukkanen, 2001) recently completed its work and included in its reform plans principles that could be named situated and social learning. Teachers in all forms and stages of education should gain skills and competencies for integrating students with diverging learning needs into the school community, for developing individualised pathways for learners and for educational collaboration inside institutes and with families, communities and work-sites. Still, the document has no solutions to delegate educational responsibility of the Re-Enter group to work-sites and communities. Another national ESF funded programme has started, aiming to become part of the regular system, developing regional centres of social competence, which should support the networking of different actors and authorities in addressing groups with social and educational needs, among others Re-Enter type youngsters.

The challenge for national and local actors remains, how to develop collaboration across sectoral borders, because the self-conception and ideologies have been and still are diverging. Another set of challenges are the different logics between working life, schools and civil society: the dominant ideology of learning organisations and personnel development provides minor space for developing communities of educational practice: the commitment to organisation controls the engagement in educational community. The staff of the good practice examples spent a lot of their time and energy in finding supportive workplaces with structures and personnel positive to slow learners, where the workers really guide and support them. The development of regional and local collaborative networks with progressive work-sites remains the duty of the educationists.

7. THE WAY FORWARD: AGAINST EXCLUSION

When low-achievers are diagnosed, they are described as lacking motivation, suffering most from experiences of the "the traditional, outdated" culture of schoolish learning in "well structured framework of a specialised institution", which is "a lousy place to learn" based on classroom situations, marks and examinations. Restricting their problems to relations to school, the good Re-Enter practices tend to remain as non-schoolish work and social activities. Through an expanded view of competences and qualifications, the youngsters with low learning abilities are assumed to become adjustable to the world of normal or high achievers. In their authenticity, most of the Re-Enter measures are artificial environments for experiencing social belonging and security, and supported by people with other learning theories and views of competences and qualifications than teachers and trainers of the normal or high achievers. The goals and aims of education in general, which Re-Enter group has difficulties to achieve, concern skills, competences and qualifications and especially personality traits, which most Re-Enter programmes avoid to mention. The targets of knowledge-based societies and economies, globalisation and networking of industry, are life-long learning knowledge workers, flexibly moving in international networks, self-directed and competitive, self-reliant and risk-taking. Solidarity, tolerance, equality, ethical concerns for others do not belong to the virtues of the enterprising self.

According to John Field (2000, 104), the politics of lifelong learning is linked to other tendencies, like the closure of options for those deemed unskilled, rising general expectations, the new policies of poverty and welfare and the way in which absence from the new learning culture becomes a mechanism for legitimating inequalities. The experiences of the low-achievers are not only related to the deficiencies of traditional learning, but reactions to the transforming aims and goals of education in general, connected to more general transformation of society and working life. The European-wide tendency to raise the level of formal education and importance of standardised certificates, strengthen the deficiency of the low-achievers in competing for continuing education or employment. Although the economic fluctuations and global redistribution of work may slow down the trend, low-achievers will have little advantage from their separate Re-Enter measures, if they are not resulting in comparable certificates as the "normal and the high achievers". Policies of lifelong learning support those who are good in the learning game, but "the most coercive forms of conscription…(…to life long learning) are likely to be applied to those who stand outside the learning society, for whatever reasons." (ibid, 124) They are being socialised in the life on the margins, as targets and consumers of lifelong measures of social integration.

The educationally and socially progressive promise of informal learning, of tacit and experiential knowledge, emerging in communities of (organisational) practice is conditional. "Close, bonded ties and strong levels of trust appear to promote a propensity to share information, ideas and skills, albeit within the boundaries of a defined set of networks and relations." (Field, Baron and Schuller, 2000, 260) Youngsters with social and educational difficulties are not helped with the methods

that the academic middle class have defined for themselves, nor by opening and broadening of pathways, even through corrective measures, as long as the exclusive practices do not change. The politics of inclusion is based on exclusion, not on equality and democracy any more. The criticism towards universal and comprehensive educational and social policies as lowering the national competitiveness strengthened all over the Europe since 1980s, but its effects were especially demoralising in the Nordic countries. The complaints of "learned helplessness" and "dependability" among low-achievers and poor, on neglect of talents and entrepreneurship belonged to the trans-national neo-liberalist policies of the 1990s. "Despite the variety of discourses on exclusion, paid employment and earning one's living is the nexus of the inclusion politics of the 1990s. Individual management of life, engagement to surrounding community or to family is not enough for inclusion politics… Simultaneously with high unemployment and instable labour market, public demands of work-ethics and the obligation to work have become louder than ever." (Julkunen, 2001, 170) Indirectly, Re-Enter programmes suggest that "the excluded lack moral, entrepreneurship and self-responsibility, and they have to be obliged to work and take care of their own livelihood." (ibid, 169) At the same time the middle-class, following the elites of Europe, are creating exclusive forms of social and health care and education for themselves.

What Manuel Castells (2000) has analysed in a global perspective is identifiable in individual countries: parallel to educational reform policy, the rules of working life, the patterns of employment and utilisation of human labour have changed, having consequences to family life, social relations and housing. (Heikkinen et al, 2001, Kettunen, 2001). According to Castells, the crucial issue is labour's role as production, which is differentiated according to workers´ characteristics. The forms of "generic labour" and "self-programmable labour" constitute the main opposites in relation to production and the critical institution for creating and maintaining the opposition is education. Generic labour is "assigned to given tasks, with no reprogramming capability, and it does not presuppose the embodiment of information and knowledge beyond the ability to receive and execute signals. These "human terminals" can, of course be replaced by machines, or by any other body around the city, the country, the world." (Castells, 2000, 372) The educated, "self-programmable" labour has the capacity to constantly reprogramme itself to ever changing tasks of production process. Along with informationalisation, globalisation goes individualisation of work through flexible and divergent work contracts and arrangements in different points of the network production and consumption.

Do the programmes against exclusion indicate the stepwise erosion of the welfare state, erosion of the principles of universal solidarity and participation, already abandoned by the economic and political elites? "The mystery of the time is that radical changes do not require radical operations… Tolerance towards economic inequality and poverty grows and politics is increasingly unable or unwilling to resist the growth of inequality."(Julkunen, 2001, 300) Ball and Vincent (2001, 184) claim, that "middle-class anxieties about social reproduction and the maintenance of

social advantage are key features of the politics of social markets… Thus, for many of the families … choice of school is a reinvestment or strategy of reconversion to conserve or enhance their class ranking. One element of this is the maintenance of exclusivity… Parents seek to place their children with others… who are like them… they seek to achieve a class fit between the habitus of home and institution and avoid social mixing." (Ball and Vincent, 2001, 185-85) The Re-Enter measures may rather be considered as expressions of middle class fears of the poor than indicators of social solidarity. (Field, 2000, 110). The post-second world war ideologies of democracy and social solidarity – even if restricted to nation-states – have been challenged by EU policies: the elites or middle class of Europe feel marginal solidarity to the poor and excluded any more… The tolerance towards economic inequality and poverty increases and the (EU) politics is less willing than ever to resist the increasing inequality of citizens." (Julkunen, 2001, 300)

Educationists have an important role in developing more holistic and integrated policies for revitalising democracy and the social. Discussions about problem groups in society often end in recommendations about making it easier for people to adjust work into the rest of their lives. Highlighting the consequences from mainstream education and work, educators could show how they should be adjusted to allow all people to participate. Their experiences with the deviant groups, practices and experiences are important, because of their connection to wider issues of development and democracy. The underpinning ideology of mainstream education may be best identifiable among those diagnosed abnormal, as the other of the mainstream. "We should listen to our deviants more – not just for what they tell us about the reasons for their personal mutation, but for what they tell us about the system and how they may be impacting on that system… the study of deviance is a key tool in establishing who holds the power to define normality in chaos, reproduction or transformation." (Davies 2001, 161). The Re-Enter youngsters may in all European countries inform about the hidden curricula of contemporary mainstream policies and practices of education.

One less recognised idea of Lave and Wenger is that not all learning is educational: education means the taking of the responsibility to design learning, to provide learners by places of engagement, materials and experiences with which to build an image of the world and themselves, ways of having an effect on the world and making their actions matter. "In the life-giving power of mutuality lies the miracle of parenthood, the essence of apprenticeship, the secret to generational encounter, the key to the creation of connections across boundaries of practise." (Wenger, 1999, 277) Re-Enter youngsters can remind us about what all human beings need during their lives: the permission for neediness and heteronomy, the right to care and parental support – and the possibility and demand to care for others. There hardly are alternatives for building on the good practices developed among the educators and the structured frameworks of learning. These might mobilise wider societal networks of actors with educational awareness in different areas of society, sharing the varying, complex and changing responsibilities of education.

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RE-ENTERING TRANSFORMABLE LABOUR
MARKETS AND THE ROLE OF VET

1. INTRODUCTION

"I've lost my job, I've lost everything"
(Graffiti on an Athens's wall)

"The system that has been set up leads to the massive end of work"
(Andre Gorz)

The chapters so far have considered how people at risk of social exclusion can be helped to reconnect with the job market through new kinds of learning opportunities. These aims assume the continued existence of a labour market that can accommodate them. This chapter questions these assumptions, and asks:

–   To what kind of labour market could the young people of Europe with low educational achievements have access in the future?
–   What kinds of jobs could they have, given their past life experiences?

This debate has taken place in the much wider context of the discourses of the "New Economy". The first part of this chapter sets out the international context for the Lisbon European Council goal of 2000 and the reframing of the European employment debate. In the second part the significance of education for re-entering 'transformable' labour markets is elaborated. The case of Greece illustrates EU influences in the move to integrative policy and practice in VET.

2. THE CONTEXT

Pivotal questions emerge in an endeavour to help the unemployed to re-enter the labour market in the age of crisis we live in. Beneath the term "New Economy" lies a profound ideological approach.

Undoubtedly there have been signs of warning for this crisis. Since the beginning of 1990s, almost parallel to the world unipolarity caused by the fall of the Socialist Regime, social systems underwent a series of crises of diverse forms but with a feature in common. Those crises stemmed from the economic field and persisted with the production system itself.

These stem from the globalisation framework of the present social system. In Europe this crisis first appeared with the decline occasioned by the European Monetary System on the national currencies. In 1994, Mexico experienced a flight of capital, which put an end to the "paradigm" of the upsurging country, and was forced to open its borders and to adopt streamlined methods. In 1997, another myth collapsed: that of Asia's "tigers" and "dragons". Immediately after, Russia's breakdown followed with the suspension of debt payments. In 1998, it was Latin America's turn although it carried out to the letter all the rules imposed by the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank. A year ago, Argentina went bankrupt again and declared itself unable to settle its exorbitant external national debt. In December 2001, the crisis got to the heart of the system with the bankruptcy of Enron, the energy giant. The "economy of fraud" (J. Estefania) had infected everything. Even Alan Greenspan of the Federal Reserve Bank, under those circumstances warned: "Adulteration and fraud are destroying capitalism and the free market, and, in the long run, our society's foundation".[i] All these took place within a world in which bread-winning labour was a gradually diminishing requirement for its economic function. J. Rifkin's book, (1995), The End of Work, quickly became a best seller owing to the heretical views that triggered off a long debate and aroused strong feelings. The thing that induces the "end of work" announces the end of what we are all used to calling "work". It does not refer to the term "work" in the anthropological or the philosophical sense of the word. It does not refer to children's upbringing, the running of the household or the work of a sculptor or a poet. It does not refer to work as an "autonomous activity in order to transform matter" or to work as "a practical and intuitive activity". It refers to the specialised work that is an essential part of industrial capitalism. The term work is not applied to work in which a woman as "a housewife" spends her time on her children's upbringing; conversely, we say that she works when spends her time on the upbringing of other people's children, for instance, in a day nursery or a kindergarten. Andre Gorz, (1997) expanded Rifkin's views in his effort to contribute to the organisation of a world beyond the present societies of work in the shape we all have in mind. "We are a society of a ghost work, which survives after its abolition owing to the importunate, reactionary claims from those who continue to believe in this society as the only possible one and are unable to imagine that there is a future other than the return to the past" Gorz contends [p.130].

3. THE FUTURE OF THE LABOUR MARKET

3.1 The shape of the economy to come

Since the early 1990s, capital restructuring in the EU has been accelerated in a context of low growth rates, slow capital accumulation, a rise in profits and high rates of unemployment. In the second half of the decade, although the situation was not dramatically different, a profound change in the economy took place.

The EU seems to follow the path of the American economy. Low inflation and low interest rates, a surplus in the federal budget, high growth rates, low unemployment[ii], rising investment, an acceleration in the productivity of labour, are some good performances[iii] of the USA economy. A more precise and strict analysis of the American "example" based on a series of indices[iv] shows that profitability in the American economy has been rising since 1983 – although it remains at a lower level than in the 1948-1965 period.[v]

The rise in profitability is attributed, firstly, to a fall of the share of wages in GDP, and secondly, to a better use of equipment (fixed capital). The fall in the share of wages since the early 1980s has been the outcome of high unemployment, weak unions, rising insecurity at work etc.[vi]

It seems now that the business cycle has reached its turning point and that the American economy has slowed down. Still, if the coming recession will be short and shallow, the "American model" will gain more strength and will be easily used as a prototype expanded in Europe. Currently, direct labour productivity is only one aspect of the employee's work. It is no longer the most imminent aspect. It is the result, the expansion, the material application of an intangible mental work, of thought, of co-ordination, of information exchange, of the exchange of observation and knowledge, which take place not only within the framework of direct work but also out of this. In other words, productive work requires "general knowledge" which forms the basis for the employee's productivity and therefore, enters the production procedure as a direct productive power (See Gorz, 1997, p. 74).

Does the US model stand for a new economic paradigm? It seems that the American economy is now at the end of a structural crisis that started in 1974. The profitability is rising, capital accumulation is accelerating, and "new technologies" and organisational innovations are introduced in the labour processes thanks to higher demand.[vii] Employment is rising up to a point near full employment. Gains in industrial productivity lead to lower prices of mechanical, electrical and electronic equipment, and thus to rising (actual and expected) profits. In other words, capital and labour have become cheaper, boosting profits and stimulating investment and employment. So, from a quantitative point of view we have a lot of evidence[viii] that the US economy is entering now a new era[ix] which may signal a new era for the EU economics too.

This new era is based on capital accumulation in the service sector. The relative share of manufacturing in the economy is shrinking, although the role of industry remains exceptional, since it is manufacturing progress that leads to cheaper equipment. Services become the bigger sector and create most of new jobs since productivity gains in services are small. To put it another way, increases in production lead to more employment, which is not the case for manufacturing.

Slow growth in productivity[x] means more employment. On the other hand it requires small rises, or even falling, in real wages, otherwise profitability and investment would decrease. Furthermore, low levels of productivity in many activities in the service sector require a low level of real wages, information technologies and some other activities are an exception. Therefore, the "working

poor" of the service sector are probably one of the new bases of capital accumulation in the new era of capitalism.

Is flexibility in the labour market necessary to these developments? Is it compatible with a "knowledge based economy"?

In the discussion below we are dealing with these problems.

4. THE SHAPE OF THE LABOUR MARKET TO COME: FLEXIBILITY AND SEGMENTATION

4.1 New forms of work organisation emerge but traditional forms are still present

The traditional organisation of industrial work (Taylorism, Fordism) was already in crisis in the early '70s. New industrial forms of work organisation appeared since automation requires new skills and knowledge, polyvalent work in groups etc. During the last decade, a "knowledge based economy" is supposed to rise. Some authors prefer to use the terms of "knowledge division of labour" (Mouhoud, 1998), "new productive paradigm" (Boyer, 1993), "lean production" (Oman, 1996), "productive management" etc. in their attempt to define the important organisational changes taking place since the crisis of Taylorism was opened.[xi]

Despite the differences of opinion, there is a general consensus concerning the general trend in the formation of the "new productive paradigm". This paradigm incorporates
- The work in groups and collective qualification.
- The ability of the workers to respond to a large spectrum of tasks and to assume several different responsibilities.
- The reduction of the hierarchy in the organisational structure of the enterprise.
- The continuous operation of the mechanical equipment.

From the above follows that:
- There is need for more technical knowledge and development of the skills of the workers.
- Their ability to process information should be reinforced through continuous training and Lifelong Learning procedures.
- There should be motivation of the workers in order to achieve the targets of the enterprise.

The new forms of work organisation, as described above, are applied mostly in industrial labour processes. The service sector is still operating under a variety of forms of work organisation, most of which are traditional. Employment grows faster in services where traditional forms of work organisation are still present. Besides automation there is neo-taylorism, simple unskilled work, traditional country-specific forms of organisation. It is mostly in the service sector where we meet a growing class of working poor, working in a context of flexibility and social

competition under the forms of "employability", self-employment and precarious work. The competencies and skills used in employment at present are the most common thing, the 'mass intelligence'. In this way, everybody is both employable and an unemployed-to-be, P. Virno claims in 1995 cited in Gorz, (1997, p. 97).

4.2 Labour market flexibility and the EMU as a workers' discipline device

When the OECD opened the respective debate in the mid-eighties (OECD 1986) first proposed labour market flexibility as the main cure to unemployment. The term 'eurosclerosis' was coined to explain the difference in employment performance after 1982 between Europe, the USA and Japan by the relatively higher rigidity of the European labour markets. The labour flexibility debate regained momentum with the recession of the first half of the nineties and the upsurge of unemployment rates, when the poor employment performance of Europe relative to those of the USA and Japan was 'rediscovered'. Greater flexibility in both external and internal labour markets was placed among the proposals for action of the White Paper on 'Growth, Competitiveness and Employment' (European Commission 1994) and its main aspects appeared among the general policy recommendations of the OECD Jobs Strategy to the Member States of the Organisation (OECD 1994).

However, the context of the 1990s was different from that of the 1980s. The re-launching of the European integration project (Single European Market, Economic and Monetary Union) as a means collectively to strengthen Europe's competitive edge against invasive competition from Japan, North America and the newly industrialising countries linked the labour market flexibility debate with the issue of Europe's external competitiveness. Towards the end of the nineties, the imminent completion of European Monetary Union (EMU) renewed the calls for 'structural reforms' of the European labour markets, but this time for reasons of internal economic and social cohesion in the euro-area.

Today, both the European Community and OECD contend that one of the consequences of EMU for EU economies is to render wages, more precisely labour costs, the key variable for short-term adjustment of the economy to external shocks and cumulative structural problems leading to low competitiveness, if unemployment is to be avoided as an adjustment variable of last resort.[xii] This line of reasoning is based on the mainstream analytical framework we presented in the previous section, which both the European Community and OECD have endorsed.

An additional implication of the same framework is that EMU imposes/gives the incentive for wage disciplines to trade unions. Inflationary outcomes and the deterioration of competitiveness are the main obstacles for collectively negotiating substantial wage increases and costly improvements of working conditions, since 'inappropriate wage increases can no longer be accommodated by national monetary and exchange rate policies' (CEC 1998, p. 13). At the same time, government intervention can be crucial as far as non-wage labour costs are concerned (tax wedge).

Another way in which EMU is expected to exert an impact on wage bargaining mechanisms and outcomes is the intensification of competition in the single market. "The introduction of a single currency is bound to increase the degree of competition in product and services markets by enhancing price transparency across EMU Member States. Thus, EMU provides an additional impetus to already ongoing efforts in the context of the Single Market Programme to improve the functioning of product and service markets. As a result, the potential for rent sharing behaviour between workers and firms will be strongly reduced" (CEC 1999, p. 145).

Finally, EMU may impose wage discipline through increased capital mobility and trade. "Firms will become even more sensitive to overall labour cost differentials and business regulations in choosing a particular location within the euro area" (Bean 1998, cited in OECD 2000, p. 94). This represents a considerable pressure for trade unions to adopt more flexible wage practices.

For its expected impact on wage determination, EMU may be viewed as a workers discipline device. Yet, all trade unions cannot be relied upon to adjust their behaviour to its imperatives. In addition, economies of scale, research and development expenditures and product differentiation leave considerable margins for high mark-ups in product markets and appropriation of rents. Reform of certain labour market institutions is therefore necessary to curb the bargaining power of unions/insiders and make them conform to the wage discipline and flexibility, which ensures adjustment, sustained growth and good employment performance in the common currency regime.

The labour market institutions that influence the bargaining power of unions (insiders) and reduce wage flexibility are employment protection legislation, atypical employment, minimum wages and the wage bargaining system.

Job security provisions make unions more inclined to bid for higher wages and this can be translated into a higher degree of real wage resistance.[xiii] Moreover, lower job turnover associated with strict employment protection legislation often implies an increase in the average duration of unemployment and the proportion of long-term unemployed. This raises unemployment persistence and diminishes the influence of unemployed on wage setting. On the contrary, the rising incidence of atypical employment reduces union density and the bargaining power of insiders, while it pushes downwards average wage in the economy because of the low bargaining power of atypical employees. Its influence on wage flexibility is certainly positive.

As far as minimum wage norms are concerned, a uniform minimum wage may contribute to reinforce insider-outsider mechanisms and reduce thereby aggregate wage flexibility. Last but not least, the wage bargaining system greatly impacts on the latter, since its degree of centralisation and co-ordination is indicative both of the union strength and of the 'responsible' or 'irresponsible' use unions make of it when bargaining on wages. According to mainstream thinking, a 'responsible' use of this strength means the consensus of unions to non-accelerating inflation nominal wage increases and real wage increases not exceeding productivity growth rates. These

rules persistently appear since 1994 in the Broad Economic Policy Guidelines decided by the European Council every year for the Member States of the EU.

4.3 Labour market flexibility in a knowledge-based economy

The Lisbon European Council (2000) adopted a new strategic goal for the European Union, replacing EMU, which was the respective goal of the 1990s and is at its final stage of achievement for 12 out of 15 Member States. According to the new strategic goal, the European Union must become in the next decade the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world.

The new goal has important implications for the European employment debate, since it involves an even greater emphasis than before of employment policy in Member States on the development of the skills and qualifications of their workforce, on life-long learning and on changes in the labour process and the forms of work in order to tap the productivity potential of new technologies. The plea for labour market flexibility has seemingly lost its thrust in the employment debate, in front of the new priority for organisational flexibility and investment in new technologies and learning as a means to improve competitiveness and reduce unemployment.

As a matter of fact, the shift of emphasis in the employment debate in Europe away from labour market flexibility has taken place gradually. The latter dominated policy priorities until the early nineties, but as labour market rigidities were progressively being addressed, the policy directions being explored started to alter in character and organisational change and technological advance came to be thought as a more promising way to ensure competitiveness and accelerate employment growth. The beginnings of this shift are clearly reflected in the European Commission's White Paper on 'Growth, competitiveness and employment' (1994), but are less apparent in the OECD's 'Jobs Study' - published shortly after the White Paper - that was overwhelmingly preoccupied with promoting labour market flexibility.

Having said this, what is the place of labour market flexibility in the European employment strategy, first adopted by the Essen European Council (December 1994) and institutionalised by the Amsterdam Treaty under the new Title on Employment? Is there a contradiction between the imperative for labour market flexibility stemming from the completion of EMU, on one hand, the emphasis of the Guidelines for the Employment Policy of Member States on employability, entrepreneurship and the flexibility of work organisation, on the other? Is a knowledge economy consistent with higher turnover and precariousness in the labour market?

To answer the first question, we must look at the relation and division of tasks between the macroeconomic and the structural component of the European employment strategy, as well as between the Broad Economic Policy Guidelines and the Employment Policy Guidelines.[xiv]

In spite of the fact that the Employment Policy Guidelines put their main emphasis on employability and entrepreneurship, labour market flexibility has not disappeared from the preoccupations of decision-makers at the Community level. The European employment strategy promotes all aspects of labour market flexibility (wage, employment, working time) with concrete policy recommendations under both the Broad Economic and the Employment Policy Guidelines.

There is no contradiction in our view between the imperative for labour market flexibility stemming from the completion of EMU and the stability priority of the European economic policy, on one hand, the emphasis of the Employment Guidelines on employability and entrepreneurship, on the other. Long-term unemployed with obsolete skills can easily pass to inactivity, whereas the unemployed that maintain their employability remain in the labour market. In a period of mass unemployment, employability increases competition among employees in the labour market for scarce jobs, thus exerting downward pressures on wages and contributing to wage flexibility.

Labour market flexibility is also compatible with the promotion of micro-entrepreneurship, since low labour costs is usually the comparative advantage of small firms in their competition with bigger ones. In a number of countries, the phenomenon of small size enterprises is common practice, particularly in commerce or the services sector, in spite of large size enterprises activated in the same sectors. In these small enterprises, the proprietor's self-employment is the rule as well as the non-paid work of the family members. Approximately 10% of today's active population in Greece falls in the category of "assisting and non-paid staff" according to the terminology used by the Statistics service (See N. Patiniotis, forthcoming).

Ease in firing and hiring, extensive use of atypical employment contracts, working-time flexibility and use of labour force in the informal (black) market allow for maintaining unit labour costs under control.

Conversely, the relation of labour market flexibility with the modernisation of work organisation is ambiguous, depending on the different aspects of flexibility. Job enrichment and enlargement, internal mobility of workers, work in groups, job rotation and quality circles are some examples of new forms of work that correspond to a more flexible work organisation. Existing empirical studies show that there is always a relation between the introduction of new forms of work and an increase in working-time flexibility (OECD 1999). In contrast, new forms of work seem incompatible with job insecurity and high turnover, since empirical evidence illustrates an increased investment of firms that have adopted more flexible working practices in the training of their staff (OECD 1999).

Whatever will be the future relation between a knowledge-based economy and labour market flexibility, its construction takes place in the middle of calls for the expansion of a flexible and employable workforce which will play in EMU the role of a safeguard against sizeable increases in wages and labour costs, which are considered to lead to inflation, loss of competitiveness, fall in production and rise of unemployment.

As a conclusion, the contradiction between "knowledge based economy" and flexibility is solved through the segmentation of the labour market: skilled, trained and educated workers compose the upper segment of the market, whereas unskilled, unqualified, less educated workers compose the lower segment.[xv] The upper segment corresponds to the "new productive paradigm" whereas the lower segment corresponds to a large number of unqualified / simple / repetitive productive activities in the service sector.

5. THE COLLECTIVE WORKER AS A LEARNING GROUP

Is collective work the most effective way to help people re-enter the labour market?

The concept of "collective worker" refers to the division of work in the labour process. The "social combination" of work, the accumulation and co-operation of labourers, i.e., a social combination of labour is a necessary condition for the continual improvements in the labour process, which are possible and necessary. Those improvements are due solely to the collective experience and observation.

Thus the collective worker is defined as a group of workers in which there is division of labour, co-operation and accumulation of knowledge and skill due to the collective experience and observation.[xvi] It is only the experience of the collective worker that can discover the possible economies in the use of fixed capital and the best way inventions can be applied in the labour process. The performance of the collective worker depends on the training and skill of the individual workers.

Individual workers linked to each other by co-operation compose the collective worker. Co-operation leads to the circulation of practical knowledge between the members of the collective worker. That means the collective worker may be seen as a learning group.[xvii]

If that is the case, there are advantages from a temporary work experience for unemployed persons, since it will give them the opportunity to learn through its practical experience and it will re-insert him in a socialisation process in ways similar to that identified in Lave and Wenger's research on 'communities of practice' (1991). This opportunity is bigger in the case of activities associated to the "knowledge based economy", that is the upper segment of the labour market. It is a smaller opportunity in the case of repetitive, unskilled and monotonous tasks composing some activities in the service sector. In these activities, the ties between the members of the collective worker are not very strong, the learning process and the socialisation process are weak.

6. THE SIGNIFICANCE OF EDUCATION FOR RE-ENTERING THE LABOUR MARKET

Entering or re-entering the professional life is thought of as the threshold of the individual's social status in the procedure of entering or re-entering the labour market. This expansion brings the social status from the dependent position of the trainee or the unemployed to that of an independent adult employee, who secures his

living. In this way the employee acquires an important social feature of a *modern personality*.

In many national systems of employment the necessary knowledge for the young people who enter the labour market or for the unemployed who re-enter the labour market are acquired by means of thoroughly organised VET systems.[xviii] In other systems of employment, *the practice* of most professions does not necessitate completed VET studies, since for most professions and jobs, "on the job training" or "situated learning" are considered adequate. In all countries, though, education, both initial and lifelong learning, is considered a necessary qualification for entering the labour market. Even in countries in which VET is not instrumental for entering or re-entering the labour market, it has been realised that participation in VET procedures increases the possibilities for entering the labour market. Thus, in recent research financed by the Greek Ministry of Labour and reported in the "Kathimerini" newspaper (10.8.2002), it was found that 32.5% of the unemployed who attended a training programme managed to find employment within 10 months after the completion of the training programme. It means that 67.5% of the trainees remained unemployed in spite of the completion of training. Among the unemployed who did not participate in any training programme, 17.3% found employment in that same period. An initial approach shows that training redoubles the unemployed people's possibilities to re-enter the labour market. This positive conclusion is related to the realisation that 71% of the trainees who have found a job, work in fields that have no or little relevance to the subject of their training. From this and a number of other findings of the research, a documented hypothesis that should become the subject of empirical research comes out; that is, those who are more active, energetic and bold decide to attend a training programme. We assume that these attributes help them find a job rather than the qualifications they acquired from the training programme.

Within this framework, vocational education and training, which has assumed the shape of the social environment, exercises a major influence on the principles, values, competencies and skills as well as the targeting and organisation of life per se. Emphasis should be laid on the fact that the educational behaviour and the learning achievements in the course of vocational education are totally based on the learning experiences of previous training periods, even those of pre-school education.[xix]

Supposing vocational education has the above mentioned effects, the trend for continuous expansion of education within a large spectrum of population, a trend that has been characterised as "democratisation of education", is related to the widespread social view that considers education, both initial and lifelong, to be a fundamental factor and a tool of qualifications' accumulation in order to meet the demands of the labour market. As mentioned earlier, we live in the era of flexibilisation of labour relations and the potential of employment, the employability, is increasingly viewed as the total responsibility of the individual. We live in times of "individualisation" of the individual, that is, in times that an individual has to take his life and future on his own hands. It is natural that

individuals should strain every nerve to increase their "exchange value", their employability in the labour market in order to compete with other applicants. It has been noted that in the "individualised" society we live in, "everyone has to learn to regard himself as an autonomous centre of action, as a design office regarding his future, his competencies, his plans, his relations etc. If he does not do that he might develop an unrelieved inferiority complex" (Beck 1986, p. 217) in an employment field that is characterised by the risk of unemployment. A trait in the effort to upsurge the exchange value is the trend for qualifications' accumulation since a would-be-employee believes that qualifications could increase the possibilities to find a job. For central European societies it has been noted that in "all levels of educational hierarchy and under the threat of unemployment, people develop a tendency to resort to procedures of additional or lifelong education. But even after the successful graduation from a vocational training, an uncertain phase of transition is repeatedly referred back to a regularity, a phase in which employment in inferior professions is followed by unemployment periods, short term working relations and under-employment or part-time jobs" (Beck, 1986, p. 241).

In this way it is possible to interpret the recent educational explosion. From our point of view, the tightness in the labour market and at the same time the increasing competition to find jobs are some of the factors responsible for the present burst in the educational demand. This intense demand is exploited by the private sector since there is not adequate provision of vocational education and training from the state authorities in most of the EU countries. Thus, a new field has been created, that of private VET. This is a field frequently pursued, with precarious results, by those who try to secure employment in the labour market.

7. INTEGRATIVE POLICY AND PRACTICE IN GREECE

The concerns and aims of Greece today in the areas of employment and initial and continuous vocational education and training mirror the tendencies apparent in other EU member states. The aim here, as elsewhere is to promote educational policies that, *inter alia*, develop human resources , improve employability among young people and combat social exclusion. The target groups are decided according to EU directives. Behind most proposed measures lie EU guidelines and appropriate funding. A serious obstacle to the process of promoting employment and the education and training of the labour force is the pluralism of the implementation agencies involved, as well as the centralisation of state authorities and the lack of meaningful links between vocational education and vocational training and between these sectors and employment. There is an insufficient supply of jobs. There is also a problem of excessive education and training of the employed given the small number of business , mostly family business enterprises.

In the framework of European prescriptions but also as part of an endeavour to link up different education and training systems, Greece is developing structures and support networks for unemployed young people in order to assist them in integrating themselves into the labour market. One particular application are the Integrated

Intervention Programmes elaborating multi-dimensional activities at national, regional and local level for anticipating and catering for certain socio-economic needs of young people starting with those perceived by the immediately interested parties but also including the demands of local labour markets. These activities are part of an integrated system of planning national, regional and local in range with a contribution from organisations and groups which undertake joint initiatives and collaborate in the implementation and evaluation of many-side ancillary support activities of the unemployed, involving both collective and individual activity.

In other words individuals participate in a variety of communities of practice and the forms that their participation takes in their various communities of practice may be quite different - they may participate quite marginally or they can be very actively involved. Experience from training programmes so far has shown that during the training procedure the interested person is mobilised through mixing with people who share the same goals, in learning communities centred on practice. This relationship however may become problematic when subsequently he seeks his own place in the labour market. Learning, therefore, is part of a personal trajectory, but a trajectory that is defined in relation to others and to joint practice with others. People learn not just to do, but in order to become. (J. Greeno et al, 2001). The process of learning through training amounts to learning in and for participation in work and society. The challenge consists in managing and communicating knowledge not through the traditional channels as structured information and accumulation of information but as part of a productive and collective process.

As far as the Greek model is concerned, it is worth emphasising again the important role played by European funding in education and training as a "cover" to the formal education system. The Greek system of compulsory school education, particularly at the secondary level, has undergone continual changes in recent years, which have a chain reaction on the transition to the tertiary level and also a drop-out effect favouring technical education. In 1988, the first year of implementation of the new reform, the Technical Vocational Lyceums, which up to then had 12,000 students, received applications from 40,000 students who had failed the entrance examinations to the general high schools, making it impossible for them to cater for the dropout-rate resulting from this. However, what has become acceptable as a statistical reality and incorporated into official Education Ministry programming for the 3rd Community Support Framework is the way of dealing with the comparatively higher (11%) drop-out rate from the nine-year course of compulsory education (pupils from 6 to 15 years old), which concerns groups of students in certain special categories (children of repatriating Greeks, gypsies, etc.) facing the greatest danger of social marginalisation (Halkiotis, 1999). In 1997 eight out of ten young persons leaving school were in employment. Nevertheless, they were occupied in low-quality jobs. It was found that the poor educational performance of young people leaving school can be attributed to social inequalities; early school-leavers in Greece come mainly from families of very low socio-economic and educational status. However, leaving school seems to follow a rather different path from most other EU countries. The small family-based character of economic units in production,

tourism etc. influences the decision by young people with difficulties performing at school to leave the educational system. In some geographical areas where tourism has a strong presence, young people can easily get a reasonably-paid job in tourist services and become independent economically and socially.

Family networks support the unemployed and re-integration programmes need their 'approval'. In the same way that family networks can facilitate re-integration programmes, they can also obstruct the process if they do not approve certain actions. Family networks can play the role the state does not play (in the case of long periods of unemployment or during their educational studies) but they can also discourage young people from participating in VET programmes.

Unemployment is not a one-dimensional phenomenon but encompasses a shortage of adequate workplaces, difficulties in linking labour supply and demand, an orientation to the training requirements both of the labour force and of the labour market, the absence of effective research mechanisms as well as measures for active support of unemployed people. The integrated intervention programmes are thus aimed at seeking to overcome these difficulties and are not confined merely to providing training but include actions and support measures for unemployed people designed to re-integrate them into the labour market. It is therefore important to emphasise that while their primary target is indeed the unemployed themselves they also take into account the social, political, institutional and cultural environment of the local communities. These integrated intervention programmes are aimed at many different categories of unemployed people.

Because the Integrated Intervention Programme involves a synergy among so many social partners – Ministry, Manpower Organisation, unions, professional associations, Federation of Greek Industries, regional MPs, etc. – a host of modifications and negotiations have been required before the final formulation of the actions, including the seminars, in order to satisfy the largest possible number of citizens and client relations[xx] In the discussions we had with one of the two Integrated Intervention Programme work counsellors concerning the co-ordination and structure of the programme and the idea each partner had of the programme, the individual in question stated that 'each party has its own vision of the Integrated Intervention Programme - the Manpower Organisation, the employers, the professional chambers – and the Institute of Labour of the Confederation of Greek Workers is called on to pull together all these different perspectives into one structure'.

The general co-ordinator of the programme – an associate of the Institute of Labour – regards the overall intervention as positive. There is planning and review of the programme at different stages in order to meet the requirements of the partners. Figures concerning the attainment of targets appear particularly positive. Out of a total of 3000 unemployed, some 1500 will have been placed (1080 in self-employment). The officer responsible is currently drawing up the final quantitative reports on the placement of the jobless in employment. Mediation presented problems because the Integrated Intervention Programme targets did not promote client relations to the extent that the agencies involved would have wished. For

example, small businesses are reluctant to accept the recommendations of the counsellor (Institute of Labour) concerning the employee they should hire.

The in-flow and allocation of resources is managed in a more co-ordinated manner. The involvement of almost all the social partners in the area, among them the employers, makes it possible to represent the real needs of the labour market, indirectly allowing the setting of priorities in respect of the training process. In a country where the educational system appears to lead a 'parallel life' to the labour market, the opportunity was created for the one to listen to the other. If the seminars were the product of market demand, in respect of the 'new technologies' seminars, this type of knowledge has both national and international tendencies. Prior inventorying of the economic and social conditions of the area, with description of labour market needs, permitted more effective subsequent intervention to attain targets.

The instructors believe that in the end it was a significant boost (whether of short or long duration or permanence the market will show) in a region where for some time nothing had happened. 'The local players played the game as they wanted to, the existing market received some stimulus, and the local population –especially the young – realised that there are structures, but not jobs for all. This in itself is important'.

As a conclusion we could remind the reader that no matter the policy measures, and vocational training systems we develop, if there are not sufficient available jobs the Lisbon target to become the 'most competitive and dynamic knowledge based economy of the world, capable of more and better jobs and greater social cohesion' will remain a distant dream for European societies.

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[i] see "Kathimerini" Newspaper, 11.8.2002, p.13.

[ii] It would be useful to mention the meaning of "unemployment" used by EUROSTAT and, in accordance, by all E.U.'s statistical services. The term "unemployed" refers to an individual who works for at least 4 hours a week. Any remunerated activity i.e., the participation of the unemployed in subsidised VET seminars, excludes the participants from the unemployment statistics. It goes without saying that nobody can make a living on the starvation salary that corresponds to the work of 4 hours a week.

[iii] *Economic Outlook*, June 1999, p. 15-21

[iv] Elias Ioakimoglou & John Milios (1992), «Capital Accumulation and Profitability Crisis in Greece (1960-1989)», *Review of Radical Political Economy*, April, Duménil, G., Glick, M., Rangel, J. (1987), «The Rate of Profit in the United States», Cambridge Journal of Economics, XI p. 331-360, Duménil G., Lévy, D. (1990), «Post Depression Trends in the Economic Rate of Return for U.S. Manufacturing», The Review of Economics and Statistics, LXXII p. 406-413, Duménil G., Lévy D. (1992), «The Historical Dynamics of Technology and Distribution: The U.S. Economy Since the Civil War», Review of Radical Political Economy, XXIV, p. 34-44, Duménil G., Lévy D. (1993), *The Economics of the Profit Rate: Competition, Crises, and Historical Tendencies in Capitalism*, Aldershot : Edward Elgar, Duménil G., Lévy D. (1996), *La dynamique du capital. Un siècle d'économie américaine*, Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, Duménil, G., Lévy, D. (1999), «Profit rates: Gravitation and Trends» in 'http://www.cepremap.cnrs.fr/~levy', Cepremap, Modem, Paris, Duménil G., Lévy D. (1999), «The field of capital mobility and the gravitation of profit rates (USA 1948-1997)», Cepremap, Modem, Paris, Duménil, G., Lévy, D. (1999), «Structural Unemployment in the Crisis of the Late Twentieth Century : A Comparison between the European and US Experiences» in R. Bellofiore (ed.), *Global Money, Capital Restructuring and the Changing Patterns of Labour*, Aldershot : Edward Elgar, p. 33-48.

[v] Duménil G. & Levy D. (1999), «The profit rate: Where and how much did it fall? Did it recover? (USA 1948-1997)», working paper version 28 Dec 1999, in: 'http://www.cepremap.cnrs.fr/~levy'.

[vi] *Beware the US Model* (1995), Edited by Lawrence Mishel & John Schmitt, Economic Policy Institute, Washington DC

[vii] «Analysing changes over time in firm-level R&D efforts we find that demand growth has a positive influence on changes in a firm's R&D effort, confirming Schmookler's (1969) 'demand-pull' hypothesis»: A. Kleinknecht (1999), «Effective demand and technological innovation», Working paper No. III/7, European Network for an Alternative Economic Policy, 'http://www.barkhof.uni-bremen.de/kua/memo/europe/tser/Publicat.html'

[viii] Duménil, G. & Lévy, D. (1997), «Structural Unemployment in the Crisis of the Late Twentieth Century», Preliminary Draft, Version December 1997

[ix] «…a wave of progress in organisation technology is under way. It is supported by information technology. In some sense, it can be interpreted as a new stage of the managerial revolution», in: Duménil, G. & Lévy, D. op. cit., p. 19.

[x] «The measure of productivity performance of America's whole economy --the rate of increase in labour productivity in all of the non farm business-- has not been especially impressive in the 1990s: only some 1.6% per year. The measured productivity performance of those industries that produce information technology goods (…) has been astonishing: an average annual rate of increase of value added per worker of nearly 25% per year», J.Brad-ford DeLong, "A long Boom?" 'http://econ161.berkeley.edu/Comments/long_boom.html'

[xi] Drucker, (1993) argues that in the new economy knowledge is not just another resource but the only meaningful resource today.

[xii] In the long term the adjustment variable is productivity.

[xiii] The real wage resistance is a wage flexibility indicator that measures the speed of real wage adjustment relative to productivity, combined with the impact of change in the tax wedge.

[xiv] The Broad Economic Policy Guidelines have precedence over the Employment Policy Guidelines, since Article 126 of the Amsterdam Treaty says that employment policies of the Member States should be consistent with the broad economic policy guidelines.

[xv] see Cain, G.G. (1976), "The Challenge of Segmented Labour Market Theories to Orthodox Theory: a Survey", in: *Journal of Economic Literature*, 14: pp. 1215 – 1257; Gordon D.M., Eduards, R., Reich, M.

(1982), Segmented Work, Divided Workers: The Historical Transformation of Labour in The United States, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; Charles, M. and Grusky, D.B., (1995), "Models for Describing the Underlying Structure of Sex Segregation", *American Journal of Sociology*, vol. 100, No. 4, January, pp. 931 – 971.

[xvi] *The organisation cannot create knowledge on its own without the initiative of the individual an the interaction that takes place within the group*, Nonaka, I. and Takeuchi, H. (1995), The Knowledge-Creating Company, N.Y. + Oxford: Oxford University Press, p. 13.

[xvii] For a slightly different view see: Wenger, E. (1999), *Communities of Practice.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

[xviii] In some countries the concept "profession" is closely related to VET. In the German speaking countries they have coined the term "Ausbildungsberufe".

[xix] For this reason one of the 16 European quality indicators of the educational system concerns the participation in education of very young children. See E.C./DG for Education and Culture, (2000), European Report on Quality of School Education-Sixteen Quality Indicators, p. 53 f.

[xx] Greek political life continues to be characterised - albeit to a lesser extent than in the past- by client relationships between parliamentary representatives and the electorate.

GERALD HEIDEGGER

SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVING THE FRAMEWORK CONDITIONS FOR RE-ENTER INITIATIVES

European Policy Recommendations

1. INTRODUCTION

The task of re-integrating young people at risk of dropping out of what is thought to be the "normal" pathway in the respective culture has to be viewed from two viewpoints:

(a)   From the point of view of the individuals, one has to ask how the opportunities for "moving on" can be supported, leading in the most favourable case to a "normal" occupational career.

(b)   From the point of view of the general socio-economic conditions, the question arises of how much help any Re-Enter scheme may be at all in order to get young at risk people an opportunity to enter long-term employment.

Any policies to improve the situation of the disadvantaged young people have to take into account both factors, especially the latter. The reason is simple. If the economy does not provide enough jobs for all, it will always be mainly the disadvantaged people who will be unemployed, especially the young ones. In this case, no kind of Re-Enter scheme will solve the problem for the disadvantaged, if one thinks only about gainful employment. This is normally not taken into consideration. The problem of the disadvantaged young people is usually seen in their lack of "employability" although this is often concealed by using the word "disadvantaged" (Rützel, 1995).

The latter is meant to prevent stigmatisation in the sense that the young people concerned should not be individually blamed for their low achievements in school and, consequently, in their transition from school to (VET to) work. In view of the logic of this situation it is almost redundant to point to empirical evidence. This shows, e. g. for the case of Germany, that the number of young people deemed not

adequately prepared for VET depends strongly on the relation of the number of young people seeking an apprenticeship and the number of apprenticeship openings available in the respective time period. This fact is translated, in the German context, into the concept of "disadvantaged by market forces" in contrast to "disadvantaged by social circumstances" (BMBF, 2001).

The investigations from which this book arises have focused on view (a) as evidenced by the previous chapters. This is sensible as view (b) is out of reach of educators and trainers, in contrast to view (a). But when it comes to policy recommendations, view (b) has to gain importance. This is not to say that the aim of this chapter should be to devise general economic measures for easing the problem of unemployment. But it has to take into account different possible socio-economic developments because these also directly influence the way Re-Enter initiatives should be carried through.

This is because their aims, and therefore the objectives and processes of the learning that takes place within them, depend on the future prospects of the trainees as to how far might be able to find a decent long-term job. This indeed influences the whole setting of these initiatives. Their objectives, learning styles, social and youth work are connected with the overall societal picture in which the work/life balance is to be seen (Enggruber, 2001).

Therefore even the more encompassing socio-cultural conditions are at stake. Their connection with different possibilities for Re-Enter schemes in various cultural settings will be briefly outlined below. These cultural settings also determine the main structures of the respective cultural VET systems. The European policy recommendations will therefore be sorted according to these basic VET structures.

2. GENERAL SOCIO-CULTURAL CONDITIONS FOR RE-ENTER INITIATIVES

One important factor determining the general socio-cultural conditions for Re-Enter initiatives is the prospect of the economy. Whilst many analyses, including most OECD and EU reports (OECD, 1999, European Commission, 1994), consider the economy as the one decisive factor it will be pointed out here that this is misleading. General assumptions about what makes life valuable and sensible – individually as well as socially – play an equally important part, particularly for the Re-Enter problem.

For our field of interest the economy is important because its structure determines
   a)   the overall rate of unemployment,
   b)   the spread of incomes for different jobs,
   c)   the quality of the jobs available.

a) The rate of unemployment is basically dependent on two factors (OECD, 1998). One factor is the growth of the economy as a whole and the growth of productivity. The other is, of course, the expansion or shrinking of the labour force. Both are interdependent, and particularly the latter is influenced by cultural traditions, such as the birth rate (in the long term), the participation of women in the

labour market, the age of retirement and the amount of immigration. One possible scenario which is much discussed in academic circles (Gorz, 2000, Beck, 1999, 1999a, Rifkin, 1995), but is also a focus of debate in the public domain (Alfred-Herrhausen-Gesellschaft, 1994, Zwickel, Lang, 1987), depicts the future in terms of a "crisis of labour/work society" where actually the crisis of the availability of gainful employment is the point of departure.

What is meant is that there will be no way back to full gainful employment as during the 1960s. New solutions for the work/life balance have to be found, even a new cultural valuation of this balance. Rifkin (1995), Beck (1999) and Gorz (2000) go even further in envisaging a society where only 20 per cent of the population of working age may, in the future, be sufficient to keep the economy running.

Even if this looks like a distant possibility it has to be taken into consideration, although in a more moderate version it may be envisaged. It means that one has to look out for new models of "maintaining" a society where the supply of the labour force exceeds the demand, for the medium term future – that is, at least until the low birth rate may lead to a considerable shrinking of the labour force (from the year 2015, or so, onwards, also depending on the respective country). This scenario is, on the other hand, not much appreciated by official EU policy since it is in contradiction to its long term aims (European Commission, 1995).

Nevertheless, if productivity gains make up for the jobs which could be created through overall economic growth, the result is what is called "jobless growth" (Aronowitz, Di Fazio, 1994). This development is thought to become ever more probable the more ICT is expected to pervade more and more sectors of the economy (Martin, Schumann, 1996). But ICT, on the other hand, is extolled as the main means for transforming Europe into the so called "knowledge based society" which is expected to excel in international competition, in this way spurring growth. During the short uplift of the so called "New Economy" it was thought that ICT could create more jobs than it destroys, but nowadays, after its dramatic collapse, the danger of jobless growth is back again in most European countries.

At least for the foreseeable future this could mean that the disadvantaged young people run the risk of entering a precarious occupational biography at the best, facing long term unemployment in the worst case. Given that possibility, Re-Enter initiatives will have to provide space and time for learning *and living* processes which are not *solely* oriented towards re-integration into VET and / or the labour market (Deutsches Jugendinstitut, 2000). Apparently, this is part of what is aimed at by employing the idea of "learning communities centred on practice" as re-defined by the project partnership.

b) One means of providing jobs has been exemplified by the US economy which created many millions of them even if the overall economic growth was still rather moderate as compared to the 1950s and 1960s. Productivity growth was held down by generating jobs in those parts of the service sector (retailing, janitors, etc.) where productivity gains are difficult to achieve, in contrast to the ICT supported modern industries and services. This is called the "productivity paradox of information technology" (Brynjolfsson, 1993). At the same time, these jobs could only be

created because of the huge – and growing – spread in incomes which makes those jobs really cheap, and their services easily affordable for the rich part of the society (Reich, 1991). Obviously, if Europe would go along this path, which is advanced by mainstream economic thinking nowadays (OECD, 1999), it would be the low achievers who would be bound to take up these jobs. But this is the pathway to the "model" of the *"working poor"* who cannot make a decent living from their wages.

Every Re-Enter policy has to take into account this possibility. What are the consequences? If one does not advocate this "model" one has again to look out for other cultural settings which give the "balance of work and life" a different meaning from the one employed by the idea of the "work society" (Offe, 1985). As especially put forward by Gorz (2000, 1983) already for two decades, the cultural valuation of life should not be centred only on gainful employment. Other features of life, such as family, friends, neighbourhoods, sports clubs, engagement in local politics, caring for the elderly or for children should be valued more highly. This would entail the necessity not only of a minimum wage, but of a "basic income" which would be independent of gainful employment. Rather it would provide a "guarantee" for being able to live a decent life under all circumstances (Gorz, 2000).

c) Similar arguments apply to the problem of the *quality of jobs* possibly available to those with low achievements. If these gain the impression that only low quality jobs will be open to them they will not be eager to prepare for them. This constitutes a big problem for motivating these young 'at risk' people to engage in occupation-related activities. The perspective of low paid and low quality jobs is, for the foreseeable future, a very real one for the low achievers, harsh as it may be. Therefore, the task of supporting young peoples "engagement", as described by Evans and Hoffmann (in this volume), has to take into account the cultural shift just outlined. The way a person is valued in society must not only be based on whether somebody is included in gainful employment or not. This is, of course, a long-term perspective. But it has to be taken into consideration even for the current Re-Enter initiatives because otherwise they will face the reproach of hypocrisy.

As a consequence, Re-Enter initiatives should not elicit, on the part of the trainees, the belief that they will be able to attain a smooth transition to (VET to) work once they have achieved the objectives of the course. Promising good job perspectives for the majority of the students would represent false prospects. Rather one should explicitly recognise the necessity to prepare for precarious work biographies, including phases of unemployment of varying length. That would mean also encouraging engagement in other fields of life than gainful employment. Beck (1999) puts forward the idea of "citizenship work" which means engaging in all sorts of activities supporting a community, as mentioned above. Admittedly, it will often also be difficult to motivate young at-risk people to participate in those activities, because they may already be too "disconnected" from the important social networks (Wresch, 1996). Nevertheless, it will always be worth trying to provide possibilities for a productive life outside gainful employment which is often at least more honest with respect to their prospects.

The idea of valuing social cohesion in its own right can be taken further by employing the concept of the "long waves" of economic development put forward by Kondratieff (1926) and further developed by Schumpeter (1961) and Mandel (1972). This theory supposes that economic growth has been going on since the take-off of industrialisation more than 200 years ago in long waves or "Kondratieff cycles" each lasting about 50 years. It is thought that each cycle is determined by the productivity gains produced by some key "basic innovations" in technology.

Although these gains, at first sight, should lead to severe unemployment, it appears that they can give the whole economy a "kick". In a sort of a dialectical process this can lead to a so called "virtuous circle", an upwards spiral so that the overall economic growth will exceed the rise of productivity and will lead, in this way, to growing demand for workers. According to this theory the economy in the rich developed countries is going through the fifth Kondratieff cycle, which is spurred by ICT. But as Nefiodow (2001) has pointed out the Kondratieff cycles should be looked upon not only as an economic phenomenon, the empirical evidence of which is still much contested, but rather as a socio-economic and even a socio-cultural setting. The question of the empirical evidence for the long waves of economic growth is then inferior to the importance of different socio-cultural factors determining the "life-style" of a society within the respective period.

Why could that be important for the future of the "work society" ? It is not much disputed that industrialisation, including its most modern forms, has led to severe problems for the society, and even the world as a whole. Most prominent are environmental issues, shortage of primary energy and waste of materials and energy. But Nefiodow (2001, p. 106) includes into this "entropic sector of society", where entropy is a measure for disorder and waste, also the mishandling of other societal issues, such as e. g. the enormous economic losses through such different things as traffic jams, excessive armament, drug abuse and trafficking, sharp rise of crime in the cities, expenditure for law courts, police and jails.

These costs are closely, if not always by causality, connected with unemployment which itself leads to high direct expenditures and huge indirect costs for the society. The latter are caused by a general deterioration of social cohesion, which is threatened by, amongst other things, individual isolation, intensified particularly through the modern media. Although only very rough guesses are possible Nefiodow (2001, p. 107) estimates that about half of the gross social product worldwide (ca. 30000 Billion Dollars) is eaten up by this waste. That means that contributing to the solution of the above mentioned problems would constitute by far the largest resource for gains in the overall societal productivity.

Taking Nefiodow's proposals (2001, chapter 5 to 8, pp. 95 – 210) and focusing on their core argument, the consequence would be that the next long wave of productive societal development would not (so much) be driven by technological innovations, but rather by social reform, that is a psycho-social innovation in the sense mentioned above. Social cohesion would not be only a moral demand, however important that is. Nor would it be only a counterbalance against some deficiencies brought about by modern industries, an interpretation to be observed in EU publications (European Commission, 1997). There the main aim, supporting the

competitiveness of European industries in the world markets, is usually supplemented by some measures to combat social exclusion which is feared to be connected with the acceleration of modernising the economy. Over and above that, social reform in the sense outlined could prove to become the main source of the growth of societal wealth by reducing the "faux frais" mentioned above (Clausen, 1988). But societal wealth would, through a culturally reformed definition, also consist to a large part in intangible goods. This is nowadays sometimes called "public health" if this concept is employed in a broad sense.

For that social work and youth work will play a decisive part. This concept would also bring with it a rather new perspective regarding the problem of re-integration of young people who are 'at risk'. Re-integration then means more than bringing young people back into VET and into the labour market. This should constitute rather a means of furthering "public health", in this case with respect to the disadvantaged youths. That means that Re-Enter initiatives should always be embedded in social networks as described in the summary. This is where the idea of learning in "communities of practice" as described by Wenger (1998) becomes extremely important.

Wenger has expanded the concept of "situated learning in communities of practice" (Lave, Wenger, 1991) beyond the boundaries of learning which improves the "officially" recognised performance in an occupation. He starts off from the example of "claims processing" in an insurance company. Although this work looks, at first sight, similar to the one at a "paper assembly line", he detects that the workers are actually shaping a community of practice. For that working is the practical reason, but creating meaning through experience and identity formation ("becoming") through belonging to the community are at least as important. Those ideas have been employed in transforming the original concept put forward by Lave and Wenger (1991) in order to address the particular research field of Re-Enter initiatives.

As has been pointed out in the summary the transformation goes even further, employing the idea of the "network society" (Castells, 2001), where the network includes local institutions and communitarian organisations, enterprises, employment agencies, schools, VET and CVT institutions etc. But the communities of practice envisaged here have to be shaped by the persons involved, that is youths, families, teachers, trainers, youth and social workers, career guidance and counselling personnel etc. (Faulstich and Zeuner, 1999). In view of the possibility that many young at risk people might never enter a continuous working biography the networking with local institutions like sports clubs or cultural centres may become even more important. These considerations about a broader meaning of re-integration young at risk people have to be taken into account when devising policy recommendations.

3. SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONDITIONS IN A SHORT TO MEDIUM TERM PERSPECTIVE

In an earlier section the more comprehensive socio-cultural conditions for Re-Enter initiatives were discussed in a long-term perspective. But it was pointed out that these conditions already have to be taken into consideration for the present Re-Enter schemes. In spite of the precautions described above, given the present cultural valuation of gainful employment, it will be necessary to devise measures which definitely improve the opportunities for low achieving young people to enter real gainful employment. And the respective Re-Enter initiatives should at least support them in finding a job with a decent pay and possibilities for acceptable working conditions and content, thus leading to adequate job satisfaction.

Therefore, the socio-economic conditions to be considered for that will be briefly outlined. Maybe the overall economic growth will again exceed the productivity gains so that unemployment would be remarkably reduced. In this case it will be necessary to educate and train as many people as possible in the best way. This is anyway a societal challenge of highest priority, for reasons of social equality and the flourishing of society (Brater and Beck, 1975). But it may also incite the above mentioned "virtuous circle" towards more employment (Berryman, Bailey, 1992), an argument put forward by the European Commission in the White Papers on "Growth, competitiveness and employment" and on "Teaching and learning – towards the cognitive society" (1994, 1995). In this case the overall conditions for young people at risk of social exclusion could considerably improve. With this in mind we turn to the current economic situation.

All over Europe a restructuring of the economy is under way which, however, is rather different for two sectors which can be broadly defined as (Lutz, 1998)
- the sector I closely connected with and exposed to the competition in the international market,
- the sector II which is more or less confined to regional conditions.

In order to judge the present labour market conditions for low achieving youngsters it is important to bear in mind that in Europe about 70 per cent of the working population are employed in sector II. This encompasses a large number of highly qualified professionals, for instance in the public service, but below the professional and sub-professional level on average the "officially" certified qualification requirements are considered to be lower than in sector I. In sector II a lot of low qualified and low paid jobs are to be found although, on the other hand, the qualification requirements, for instance for running a small retail shop, are usually severely underestimated.

For the restructuring in sector I two tendencies are to be observed:
- ICT supported group work where the competences required are rising and well paid jobs are offered (Nonaka and Takeuchi, 1995); here the networking of "learning organisations" is often aimed at which leads to the conception of the "collective worker" (Ioakimoglou, in this volume). This is the restructuring of the work organisation which is expected for the so-

    called "post-Fordist" economy that is often thought to be coming about (Drucker, 1993).
- As a counterpart, ICT supported "Neo-Tayloristic" division of labour (Lutz, Schulz-Wild, 1996) is often to be found as well – be it in the production sector or the sector of production-oriented services.

It is difficult to estimate the future development, even in a short to medium term perspective, of the labour market for people who are not, for whatever reason, achieving so well. But some tendencies are to be observed which point in the direction that the divide between the high skill/high wages and the low skill/low wages sector (Piore and Sabel, 1984) may increase in Europe, too. As has been mentioned, this would mean that the opportunities of young people who have had difficulties in school, that is the "target-group" of the Re-Enter initiatives, might become even more limited. This of course would hamper the success of these initiatives, because these young people may not recognise sufficient career options and therefore become less motivated and engaged.

There are three main consequences of this:
- The Re-Enter initiatives should aim at supporting the low achieving young people's *personal development*. This should strengthen their self-assurance under very difficult external circumstances. This is one main reason why we suggest to focus the attention on the learning processes in the initiatives and on the learners themselves – to support them in "moving on".
- The above mentioned sector II may be a field where low achieving youngsters might most easily find a place where they can perform a sensible job and earn money for making a decent living. Therefore the relevance of this sector for social cohesion and inclusive VET in Europe should be more clearly recognised, also in relation to sector I where the economic competitiveness of Europe is promoted.
- In general, because the occupational options of low achieving young people are rather closely geared to the labour market, it is obvious that the implementation of Re-Enter initiatives should be combined with adequate labour market policies. These should combat the impending increase of the spread of incomes particularly with respect to the relation of wages in sector I and sector II, including the already huge spread within the sectors themselves.

These policies should take into account especially opportunities for people who are not achieving so well. VET policies should not only focus on jobs connected with the most modern technologies which on the "middle" level are mostly to be found in sector I. They should, with similar intensity, aim at improving learning and personal development of those on the lower rungs of the career ladder. This is easier for the sector II just because it is not so much exposed to international competition.

4. RE-INTEGRATION OF LOW ACHIEVING YOUNG PEOPLE ON THEIR WAY FROM SCHOOL TO WORK

The first threshold for young people at risk of leaving the "normal" pathway from school to VET to work is represented by the learning requirements at school. There may be many reasons for this, but one is certainly that conventional schooling does not sufficiently take into consideration different learning styles. Students who are low achieving with respect to the conventional school curriculum usually prefer, using Wenger's (1998) scheme, learning which

- provides meaning ("learning as experience"),
- is connected to practice ("learning as doing"),
- takes place in a community ("learning as belonging"),
- is connected with the identity of the learner ("learning as becoming").

This has been asserted through the analyses of this project partnership and has led to the conception of "learning communities centred on practice" developed particularly for Re-Enter initiatives.

But general schooling, too, should be improved by taking into account this leading hypothesis of the project. When it comes to the task of re-integrating young at risk people into the "normal" pathway the "hidden curriculum" of conventional schooling should not be overlooked, comprising all too often too little meaning, practice and common work relevant for one's own identity.

But for the extreme alternative after compulsory school, that is directly taking up a job in an enterprise, the "hidden curriculum" of the workplace should also be taken into account: How much meaning does it provide? Is the practical work stimulating problem solving? Is there solidarity to be experienced in the work group or is competition governing everything, implying that only the persons with the strongest identity can hold out, especially also with regard to the power hierarchies at the workplace? The example of the "claims processors" in an insurance company, analysed by Wenger (1998, pp. 18 - 38), shows that even under rather restrictive working conditions the working group may develop activities for mental support. But it is also shown that "relatively low achievers" are, after some time, left behind.

Therefore measures for re-integrating young people at risk of dropping out have to serve, even more so than VET for the mainstream population, as a bridge between school and work, where both experiences from school and requirements of the workplace have to be looked at in a critical perspective. They should allow for new settings which prevent the disadvantaged from experiencing situations of failure similar to those in school. They should also provide opportunities for work-based learning which shelter them temporarily from too harsh conditions of the world of work, in order to let them develop enough self-assurance for not dropping out.

In the past and still up to the present time, many efforts have been made to support disadvantaged young people through prolongation of compulsory ("general") education, often in additional classes. But because these young people had there, as a rule, similar experiences of failure as in the conventional school, these measures proved to be rather unsuccessful. Therefore the trend should be strengthened to devise measures which are closer to VET proper. The features of

Re-Enter initiatives should be judged more from the point of view of being able to participate in VET and less concerned with asking if the compulsory school curriculum has been completed. The main aim should therefore not just be to provide the young people with the customary (lower secondary) school leaving certificate. This means a change of perspective, that is a view "backwards" from VET to the prevocational education and training in measures for re-integration.

If jobs are available it may be attempted to include the young people in the normal activities of an enterprise, as unskilled workers. But in this case the expectation should be justified that they can, step by step, acquire the competences and attitudes necessary to take part in some sort of further education, in this way entering a career pathway which is founded on some basic VET. Here the task of supporting both the young people and the enterprises, in fostering the transition to VET proper, maybe in a modular system, arises.

On the other hand, the idea of "integrative education" must not be overlooked. For compulsory schooling this means that disadvantaged pupils are taught together with the mainstream population of the school, in this way combating the process of stigmatisation and furthering social inclusion. This method can also be pursued for VET, especially in VET systems with a strong basis in vocational schools. Here it may be tried more and more to "mainstream" the disadvantaged young people so that they may be able to earn an acknowledged certificate after a suitable time.

In addition, there is the possibility of implementing "special" classes in vocational schools. This method can be and is often applied in VET systems of alternance between vocational school and workplace learning. In this case, often the disadvantaged young people are not able to find an apprenticeship or are thought not to be able to take advantage of industry attachments or internships. Therefore these classes for "special VET" – in the sense of "special education" – are normally conducted mainly in the vocational schools. If adequately designed, they may be, in some respects, rather close to what is called in this book Re-Enter initiatives.

These Re-Enter initiatives, for which examples of good practice have been collected and evaluated by the project partners, are distinguished in that they employ the approach of "situated learning", as far as possible in "learning communities centred on practice", as defined by the project partnership. The most important features, from the point of view of the project partners, are described in the respective chapters of this book and put into an overall picture in the summary. In conclusion of the conditions described so far, to examine the possibilities for improving Re-Enter schemes one has to take into account three aspects (Petersen, 2002):

a) to support gaining competences which should be useful for performing in gainful employment but in ways which provide experience ("meaning") and are connected to practice ("doing");
b) to foster personality development ("becoming") towards
  - identity formation,
  - personal independence,
  - mental strength;

c) to shape networks which underpin communities of practice as defined above ("belonging"), including entities which are not related to gainful employment.

The last aspect points to the necessity to integrate, within the Re-enter initiatives, occupation-related activities with social work and youth work. This has been partly realised already. But usually one finds a combination where trainers and social workers follow their own pathway, one alongside the other. Instead, a real *integration* should be aimed at where the different actors in the field adjust their respective activities so that a *holistic concept* emerges (Kauppi, 1997).

5. RE-ENTER INITIATIVES BETWEEN "SCHOOLING" AND WORK-PLACE LEARNING

The Re-Enter Initiatives proper are especially designed for disadvantaged young people, with respect to the institutional setting and the learning and teaching methods applied. Many of them have developed very innovative features. Therefore they constitute the focus of the research of the project partners and also of the following deliberations. But it should be borne in mind that the respective cultural traditions are rather strong. Even within one and the same country, there often do exist different traditions at the same time.

It is therefore not recommended just to replace one of the above mentioned methods by another one, not even by the Re-enter initiatives presented as examples of good practice. Instead, fostering processes of mutual learning between different methods is suggested which should especially take into consideration the promising features of the collected examples of good practice, including some unconventional measures which have been analysed. This applies to cross-cultural mutual learning between the measures of different countries, but it also applies to the different traditions often to be found within one country. In the latter case networks of institutions carrying through re-integration measures should be established particularly on the regional level (Röhrle, 1994). Often there exists little mutual knowledge about what the other institutions are doing. An example is the weak co-ordination between prevocational courses in vocational schools and independent Re-Enter initiatives which has been diagnosed for the case of Germany (GEW, 1999).

Learning, teaching and training for re-integration share on the one hand quite a lot with customary VET, on the other hand one has of course to be very much aware of the target group. As has been explained in the summary the main aim is not to prepare young people for starting an occupational career at once but to prepare them for "moving on", that is to try to get to the starting point or, rather, to enter step by step a pathway which is acknowledged to be "normal" or "mainstream" in the respective culture. Therefore the general aims of VET have to be adapted. It is not so important what the particular competences are, with regard to a particular occupation. The main objective should be that young people acquire "key competences" (Nijhof and Streumer, 1998) which enable them to get to this starting point or just to "move on".

Traditional VET is determined by two main factors, which are interconnected, as is already indicated in the term "Vocational Education and Training":
- training for an occupation where jobs are available in the labour market;
- education for being a competent worker and responsible citizen.

The first component is aiming at a particular area of occupations and, at the same time, should aim at key competences in order to be able to perform new tasks within an occupation or to change the occupational field. *Training* with respect to everyday work tasks, including becoming able to behave successfully in the respective social surroundings, is mostly thought to require phases of training at a work site in an enterprise. Of course, in a VET system based mainly on schooling, these competences may be also acquired during the initial stages of being introduced into the first job of gainful employment, apart from the experiences gained during industry attachments.

Vocational Education in the sense mentioned is acknowledged to be the task of vocational schools, including also Further Education Colleges, for instance.

Thus both places of learning can and should contribute to VET with their specific strengths, so that systems of alternance between enterprise training and vocational schooling gain importance in most European countries (Stenström and Lasonen, 2000). But there are very remarkable differences with respect to the relative importance of the two places of learning and particularly with regard to the institutional setting. In addition, in some countries training workshops are implemented which are run by chambers of crafts, industry and commerce and often resemble the training workshops which are established in most vocational schools.

This variety is very important for the task of re-integration of disadvantaged young people in the different countries because it represents not only the institutional, but in a wider perspective also the respective cultural background. It also applies for the Re-Enter initiatives especially designed for re-integration.

For the target group of low achieving young people the two aims mentioned above have to be adapted in a suitable way, with a shift of focus. This results in some requirements Re-Enter initiatives should meet. They may try to find a new balance of combining the advantages of work-place training and school education, in this way attempting to provide the largest benefits possible for the young at-risk people. This function of bridging the features of training in enterprises and education in (vocational) schools is outlined in Table 1.

The *first aim, training for an occupation* where jobs are available in the labour market, has to be redefined as "training for employability". For the case of "normal" VET, this aim is often criticised (Hendrich, 2002) because it tends to replace the aim of becoming a competent worker in a specific field by the objective of acquiring general competencies and attitudes which allow for the highest possible flexibility in the labour market (Stasz, 1998). This means that the personal identity to be gained through recognising to be a "master in the field" is severely obstructed, thus threatening to lead to societal disintegration. But for the disadvantaged young people, acknowledging their particular situation, a main obstacle is indeed that they often have difficulties in coping with the rather strict rules and demanding training

tasks prevailing in an enterprise, so that "employability" represents an important step forward. Therefore it seems sensible to include conventional enterprises in Re-Enter initiatives especially in countries with a large proportion of small and micro-enterprises where situated learning suggests itself.

With respect to the power to define the situation, training in enterprises, even if it is guided by official regulations, is mostly determined by the employers. Because it is aiming at the objectives of the enterprise, personal preferences of the trainees play only a minor part. This is where Re-Enter initiatives should take the identities of the at risk youngsters more strongly into consideration because it represents a major reason for drop out.

The training at the work-site provides the great advantage of authentic work tasks. This has been reported nearly unanimously as being a very important fact promoting motivation and engagement especially of people who are less interested in theoretical learning. Therefore it should be taken into account for Re-Enter initiatives while keeping in mind the particular personal "features" of young at risk people.

It has already been mentioned that the social features not only of working in an enterprise, but also of training at the work-site can lead to demotivation and disengagement of young people who do not have a large amount of self-assurance, because a concern for personal feelings may not be usual. The fact, however, that young people can take on to some extent the role of an adult, respected for the contribution she or he makes to the overall result of the work tasks, represents a feature favourable for at least the more independent young people (Chartner and Rolzinski, 1987).

The *second aim, education for becoming a competent worker and responsible citizen*, must of course be kept, but it may also be adapted to the special needs of young people at risk.

At least for the initial stage of entering VET and/or the world of work, the aim related to content, that is knowledge and skills, should be lessened in relation to the priority of being able to participate in work processes. But the objective of moving from the periphery at least a little more to the centre of a community of practice should never be given up.

Education for being a responsible citizen (Jowell and Park, 1998), a main task of the vocational schools, may stress more the process of identity formation because this is where young people with a problematic social background often have experienced the greatest difficulties (Popkewitz, 2000). A strong personal identity is considered to be the most important precondition for acting in a socially responsible way, thus enabling to participate actively in social life (citizenship).

Because the pathway of young people in vocational schools is usually determined by these institutions here again the personal preferences of the young people might be more strongly taken into account. In the contributions of the partners, compiled in the summary, it has been pointed out that more counselling may be desirable for young at risk people instead of overly strict forms of guidance.

Table 1: Re-Enter initiatives as a bridge between training in enterprises and education in vocational schools

	Training in enterprises	Learning in Re-Enter initiatives	Education in vocational schools
Aims	Training for employability	Learning for - personal development ("becoming") - social "skills" - developing a "life project" - "trainability"	Education for - identity formation - social responsibility (citizenship) - participation - content-related: knowledge skills
Who defines the situation?	Employer led	Route counselling: combination of - led by Re-Enter agencies - personal choice	Led by VET-institutions
Learning and teaching methods	Training at the work-site: authentic work tasks	"meaningful" work tasks ("experience") aiming at the "world outside": *situated learning in communities of practice* ("doing", (belonging"))	simulation of the "world outside"
Social features:	* disregard of personal feelings * role of an adult	route counselling: *career *social guidance: guidance: occupational educational growth caring *Integration* of customary *social work VET *youth work	"parenting": *safe, tolerant, permitting *normative, disciplining

Vocational schools try to enrich the meaning of the learning process by simulating the "world outside". As mentioned, this can sometimes be enhanced so that important features of "situated learning" may be realised.

With respect to the social features of the learning process vocational schools try to provide a "parenting" atmosphere, representing two components partly counteracting each other. One comprises the safe and tolerant aspects which often

foster the well being of the youngsters, permitting unconventional behaviour of young at-risk people. The other is characterised by the normative, disciplining aspects which may sometimes deter these young people and appear to be a reason for dropping out. Here the more open approaches of youth work and social work suggest themselves.

In view of these two aims of VET and their adaptation to the needs of young at risk people *Re-Enter initiatives proper* as described in this book can be looked upon as *bridging training in enterprises and education in vocational schools.* They try to take up the respective advantages of work-place training and school based education while avoiding the less favourable features.

As has been described in detail in the other parts of the book they aim primarily at learning for personal development ("becoming"), combining furthering identity formation and by that enhancing "trainability" and later employability. The approach is to strengthen social "skills" for behaving in a community of practice in an acceptable manner. This should represent an important component of education for social responsibility and, in this line, for citizenship. A main goal is to support the young people in developing a "life project", even under rather unfavourable circumstances. This means "moving on" in the first place, but then also to start to move in a specific direction planned by oneself.

Accordingly, the model of "route counselling", described and analysed by the Belgian partners, appears to be very promising when it comes to the question who is defining the learning (and living!) situation. It takes up the personal preferences of the young people concerned and attempts to relate it to the possibilities at hand for them. In this way, it represents the responsibility of the Re-Enter agency, but at the same time it supports personal choice as much as possible.

With respect to the learning and teaching methods the examples of good practice of Re-Enter initiatives concentrate on "learning communities centred on practice", as has been described in detail in the other parts of the book. That is, they foster learning as doing ("practice") and learning as belonging (in a "community").

The work tasks assigned should be meaningful, giving rise to "real" experiences, and should be designed in a way which should find a balance between the authentic work tasks typical for a real work-site and the simulation of the "world outside" as often found in vocational schools. They are partly connected to a real work-site, but they provide circumstances which allow for flexibility with respect to the strict rules. That is, they are at least aiming at the "world outside" even if they stay a little apart from it.

Regarding the social features Re-Enter initiatives have to try to find a balance between the atmosphere of a vocational school and the demanding structures of the world of work. Here again the model of route counselling described by the Belgian partners appears to offer significant suggestions even if many examples of good practice in various countries have incorporated important aspects of this model already, too. One very promising feature is that route counselling *integrates* career guidance with social guidance, but in both cases in a "soft" way which leaves much space for personal choices.

Career guidance is aiming at "occupational growth" in the first place, that is "moving on" on in a direction which should be worked out increasingly by the participant herself or himself. At the same time, social guidance provides for educational caring while allowing for the unconventional life styles of the young people concerned.

In this way, Re-Enter initiatives can represent an *integration* of VET proper on the one hand and social work and youth work on the other, altering both sides so that the aims of the Re-Enter initiatives suit the special needs of the young people. While combining VET with social work and youth work is a feature of re-integration measures in most countries the flexible approach of route counselling may make it more easily applicable especially for cases where VET is structured in a more open manner.

6. FRAMEWORK CONDITIONS OF EUROPEAN VET-STRUCTURES FOR RE-ENTER INITIATIVES

In general, as the most important result of the project partnership it can be stated that LCPs as defined in this book, contributes strongly to good practice in Re-Enter initiatives.

When it comes to suggestions for improving Re-Enter schemes in different countries, the institutional setting of the education and VET systems and the particular cultural traditions play, as has been already stressed, a very significant part. This has been described in the partners' contributions to the meta-analysis and in the previous national reports (see Socrates project partnership, 2000). But the partners have also pointed out how specific aspects of situated learning can be connected with the various institutional settings and cultural traditions. The most important common features of good practice that support the approach of situated learning have been collected, in conclusion, at the end of the summary. They combine results of the national reports and the perspectives put forward by the partners in the meta-analysis and present framework conditions and implications of this approach.

Nevertheless, it may be useful to give some indications as to which features might be observed particularly for the respective systems. As is well known, all national systems are "mixed" systems, comprising different sections, like lower and higher school-based VET, training at the work site – often connected to learning in further education colleges – , structures of alternance between vocational school and work place, "dual systems" where employers, state agencies and trade unions are involved (tripartite structure), and a sector of non-formal training, and indeed some others.

Whilst some national systems, e.g. in the Netherlands and also in Belgium, are usually explicitly described as mixed systems, in many countries one or two structures are determining the overall setting to a greater degree. For example, in Finland VET is mostly carried through in vocational schools while in Germany the dual system proper is prevalent although there does exist a school-based route, too.

Suggestions can be made, therefore, not for the whole system of a country but only with regard to specific model structures. A respective national system is then represented by a specific combination of these *analytically defined* model structures. It should be noted that the selection of these model structures relies on the result of the studies undertaken by the project partnership because they aim at underpinning the relation between the model structures and the suggestions for improving Re-Enter schemes within them. Therefore only countries where empirical findings have been analysed are included in the following. To expand the deliberations to the other countries of Europe remains a task for future analyses although the rather general model structures defined below should be valuable for this too, if suitably adapted (e.g. Eckert and Kirsch, 1996).

In order to make the important features as apparent as possible, the structures chosen are the most distinct versions. For instance instead of different forms of alternance the most strongly structured case is chosen, the dual system (Greinert, 1994).

Along these lines it appears to be sensible to *define analytically four model structures* of VET:
- strong school-based case;
- dual case;
- market-driven case;
- case of a strong non-formal sector of vocational training.

This is presented in Table 2: Re-Enter in European VET structures (analytical).

It is of course not intended in this section to compare these structures in general. The aim is rather to point out in which way Re-Enter initiatives can make the best use of the features of the respective model structures. Nevertheless, some hints with regard to the relation of the four model structures and cultural traditions may be instructive, even if they draw, in this brief outline, only a crude picture. In addition, the manifold interactions between different influences, however important they may be, cannot be allowed for.

The first question important for the state of VET is simply at what time in history thorough industrialisation has taken off. If agriculture has prevailed well into the 20th century, as in some parts of the southern European countries, a comprehensive system of VET has not be developed. Instead, more non-formal methods of vocational training, like apprenticeship-like arrangements in the crafts, are still quite important. These non-formal arrangements tend to influence other sectors of the economy. In this way, they may provide a rather strong non-formal sector of vocational training which can support situated learning in communities of practice very well.

Table 2: Re-Enter in European VET structures (analytical)

Strong non-formal sector	Market-driven	"Dual" (enterprise-school)	Strong school-based
VET-Structures			
Strengths:			
tradition of - informal learning - self-employment - family support	- close to market needs - flexible - learning situated in "real world" of work	- "secure", structured pathways - alternating learning	- close relation practice-theory possible - "integrative" - social, ethical education
Weaknesses:			
- relatively little formal VET - lack of formal supporting structures	- insecure pathways - little education for citizenship	- inflexible pathways - access thresholds - partly separated from labour market needs	- little enterprise-based training - school-to-work transition - drop out
Orientations:			
- expanding the initiatives - stronger commitment of institutions - strengthening unconventional initiatives	- stronger structures - education/ "schooling" - expanding ∗social work ∗youth work	- open structures - less schematic "schemes" - against "revolving door effect" - "after-care"	- networking with enterprises - more self-reliance of young people - stronger situated learning
Raising the status of VET in general		Supporting "moving on"	

Apart from these traditional sectors the capitalist market system is determining the economy all over Europe. The *second important* question is, however, to what degree the market forces are counteracted by social policy. Untamed market forces gain more importance in all European countries and are usually supported by economic "reforms", particularly of the labour market, leading to larger spreads of incomes and sharpened hierarchies of jobs, viewed with regard to the whole economy, not only to the above mentioned sector I of internationally competing

industries. But under cultural circumstances where the free market has been traditionally valued very highly, like in the UK, social policy is aiming more at preventing "real" poverty (Sassen, 1996) whilst laying less stress on intruding into labour relations, including VET. In line with this, Re-Enter initiatives often tend more to prevent young people form dropping out of a "normal" life-style altogether. The task of re-integrating those young people who are most at risk into a conventional occupational career appears sometimes to be less influential (Petersen, 2002). "Market workfare" programmes (Mead and Field, 1997), on the other hand, appear to stress more the stick than the carrot, an approach which could push the target group even more to the margins.

The *third question* relates to the amount to which a regulation of labour relations between employers and trade unions is established which transcends the usual battle over wages. Co-operative agreements, including the establishment of works councils, rest on a long tradition of a society which is less influenced by the ideas of (economic) liberalism. This has led particularly in the case of the German speaking area to the strongly regulated "dual" VET system which is actually a "tripartite" structure because employers, trade unions and the state all play a part. Apart from the gymnasium leading usually to higher education, the "dual system" is designed so as to be comprehensive, that is including everybody which means also the "low achievers" (Pütz, 1993). In this line special programmes for them always focus on re-integration into the apprenticeship system, that is trying to provide competences which are useful for performing in gainful employment. Activities not related to an occupational career are much less valued. Therefore there is too much separation between the VET system proper and the area of social work and particularly youth work. The same is true for the education of the professionals for VET and social and youth work.

The *fourth aspect* is the degree to which a society has developed a self-image of a "social democracy". This idea transcends the concept of "social cohesion", advanced by the European Commission (1994), which is intended to combat the social exclusion that it is feared will result from the deregulation of the labour market. It views society as an entity where people govern themselves consciously and the economy is a means rather than an end in itself. This kind of thinking has a long tradition in the Scandinavian countries even if the ideology of the free market is gaining increasing influence there, too.

In the Nordic countries, that is including Finland, this has led to the belief that the democratic state is responsible for providing an outstanding education for all, including education for citizenship integrated in VET (Fröyland et al, 1997). Of course the structure of social classes remains important there, too. Nevertheless, a comprehensive system of education has been established, including high quality vocational schools (Heikkinen, 1994). These aim at integrating also the "low achieving" young people. But because in this case there do exist very problematic social circumstances for some people, the necessity of catering for particular needs through special programmes for the disadvantaged cannot be completely neglected.

With regard to the endeavour of providing good opportunities for re-integrating young people at risk of social exclusion all four model structures show specific

strengths with respect to the requirement of LCPs as defined by the project partners. In this way, they provide orientations, in the sense of furthering mutual learning by the different structures. But at the same time weaknesses are to be detected, too, which point to particular challenges for improving the Re-enter initiatives.

In the following, the four analytically defined model structures are described in a little more in detail, focusing on the Re-Enter problem. The general precautions with regard to international comparisons have to be borne in mind (Maurice, 1991). As mentioned, the aim of the analysis is "mutual learning", where one tries to understand the "inner" logics and dynamics of different cultural systems in order to improve a specific system, instead of just trying to transfer the "solutions" developed for another cultural setting (Heidegger, 1995). This approach has also proved to be rather successful for the more encompassing investigations of strategies of post-16 education in Europe (Lasonen, 1996).

6.1 Strong non-formal sector of training

Learning in the non-formal sector is closest to what has been originally called "situated learning in communities of practice" by Lave and Wenger (1991). Where there is still a strong tradition of informal learning this offers good opportunities for young people who have difficulties in formal settings of teaching and training. It is often in small enterprises where these young people can start at the periphery of the whole work process and become more and more engaged. A still rather strong culture of self-employment, especially in the countryside, will also often provide much family support, that is "parenting" in the sense of surroundings which are safe, but also normative and disciplining, possibly sometimes with too little tolerance for non-traditional behaviour which is typical for the target group.

Indeed, in some southern European regions youth unemployment figures are relatively low which seems to be due to these circumstances. Therefore it appears to be reasonable to support this structure where it is still working well although one has to reckon with a strong tendency of weakening of these traditional settings.

Most of the relevant jobs are to be found in traditional sectors of employment. On the one hand, the competences necessary for performing these jobs, for instance in the crafts or in the retail trade sector, in an effective and efficient manner are nowadays usually heavily underestimated. This is true even more so if someone becomes self-employed, running a micro-business successfully (Fischer, 1995). On the other hand, because of this low esteem these jobs are normally poorly paid. This could be counteracted by suitable economic policies assisting small businesses or labour market policies supporting people in low paid jobs, for example in the tourism industry, although this solution is the subject of much debate in the discourse about social policy.

Nevertheless, it may be expected that many young people will find the opportunities described less and less attractive. Therefore there are problems of supporting low achieving young people in structures of a strong non-formal sector if the connection to the modern sectors of the economy is, in the respective region,

weak. In this case the amount of formal VET provision is relatively limited which means that there is a lack of formal supporting structures for these young people.

Therefore, the options for improving opportunities of re-integration in this case are rather obvious. The scope of the Re-Enter initiatives should be expanded and the VET institutions may develop a stronger commitment to supporting these young people. An important means of achieving this should be to include the special requirements for dealing with the target group into the education and training of vocational teachers and trainers, including continuing in-service training. Raising the status of VET in general, as compared to Higher Education, should be a very important aim although it appears to be difficult to achieve because it is connected to the cultural meaning of education in general. In addition, these possibilities depend very much on the development of the regional labour market. Therefore unconventional initiatives suggest themselves. As several examples of good practice from different countries, described by the respective partners, have shown these aim at providing some social stability during the difficult passage from childhood to adulthood. The aim is to keep young people moving on and not indulging in inactivity or unlawful activities.

6.2 Market driven structure

In this structure vocational training is taking place while young people are already holding a more or less "normal" job where employers are often asked to and sometimes indeed do carry through special training activities (Dearing, 1996). In this way the learning is highly situated in the surroundings of a conventional work-site which often supports motivation through taking on the role of an adult (Eraut, 1998). But low achievers especially might have difficulties in moving from the periphery closer to the centre and may become trapped in low qualified and low paid jobs.

Because this structure is very flexible with regard to labour market needs the opportunities to be trained in an occupation where jobs can be found are relatively good, at least under favourable conditions in the labour market. Very often the young people are offered opportunities to taking courses in for instance a further education college so that elements of alternating learning are introduced. For low achievers, Re-Enter initiatives proper can be easily implemented into such a structure just because it is so flexible.

Problems arise as the counterpart of the relative strengths of this structure:

The flexibility also means that the pathways to be taken are insecure, so the possibility of dropping out again remains a constant risk. This again might often undermine the motivation and engagement of young people. On the other hand, this means of course that people can come back after some time, even several times, so that this structure is really open. Young people may adapt their learning and working to the lifestyle which suits them best at a particular age, an opportunity which has been shown to be important for the target group. On the other hand, obviously the danger arises that people might drop out for good. A serious problem is that in the market driven structure the spread of incomes is large and has during the last two

decades, widened considerably. This leaves mostly low paid jobs for the low achievers. Also the low paid jobs often require only minor competences which provides little job satisfaction.

In addition, the inclusion of social workers and youth workers is not obligatory in such a structure although of course in the real "mixed" cases there are always some of them working in the field. Because there is no clearly structured alternance between workplace learning and vocational schools (or further education colleges, respectively) education for citizenship is generally lacking (Kerr, 1999).

These weaknesses point to some orientations for Re-Enter initiatives in such a structure. The initiatives should be more firmly established within the overall VET structure which itself may be considerably strengthened and thereby raised in its status. For the young people at risk a "tightly knit" safety net (OECD, 2000) should be created which provides regular support by social workers and youth workers. But the "locally managed tracking mechanisms that allow early leavers at risk to be quickly identified and provided with assistance" (OECD, loc. cit., Working group III, p.3) may sometimes prove to be counterproductive because it could possibly increase the resistance of these young people, resulting in low motivation and no engagement at all, in the worst case.

These aspects, however, have been shown, as a result of this European project, to be of utmost importance for effective and successful Re-Enter initiatives. What one can learn from more open structures is that they sometimes allow for time and space, during the difficult phase of becoming adult, for taking one's own decisions. On the other hand, sensitive tracking might prevent serious alienation from societal networks. Indeed, a more closely woven safety net may provide also education for citizenship and could even take on some aspects of vocational "schooling" which may provide more security for the at risk young people, given the "parenting" feature of good vocational schools set out in the previous section.

6.3 Dual VET structure with strong influence of employers and trade unions

In this structure where the teaching/learning alternates between work place and school, situated learning is essentially supported for the apprentices (Guile and Young, 1999). If the learning at school is suitably connected with the workplace learning, which is not always the case, reflective forms of problem solving can be strengthened (Heidegger et al, 1997).

The structure of the dual system has proved to be rather inclusive at least in times when there are more apprenticeship places available than young people seeking a place. This is due to the hierarchy of occupations which in fact does exist so that there are a lot of occupations where the cognitive requirements are not all that demanding (Reuling, 1998). Under favourable labour market conditions opportunities for low achieving students may be available. Indeed, it has been pointed out that the fraction of young people considered not to be adequately prepared for VET depends rather strongly on whether there is a shortage or a surplus of apprenticeship places open for the young people. This again depends on general economic conditions but also on the labour market and especially the VET policies

which are pursued. The apprenticeship represents a clearly structured pathway that provides security once one is able to enter an apprenticeship contract. Although there is a "second threshold" for getting a job after completion of an apprenticeship it has turned out that under favourable labour market conditions the opportunities of young people (other than the most explicitly disadvantaged) for entering the labour market of adults are rather good.

Nevertheless the threshold for access to an apprenticeship represents the most severe weakness of this structure with regard to low achieving school leavers. It is this threshold which has, for instance in Germany, resulted in establishing a large number of Re-Enter initiatives. In addition, the well structured pathways are at the same time rather inflexible, and the structure of the apprenticeship (sub-)system is often not close enough to labour market needs. For there is a relevant difference between the apprenticeship market, geared to opportunities offered by the employers, and the labour market for adults. This means that for the low achieving young people the second threshold, the passage to an adequate job in the adults' labour market, indeed presents another large problem.

These weaknesses represent great challenges for improving the structure of measures for re-integration even if these themselves are rather well established and employ important features of "action oriented learning" including components of situated learning (Engeström, 1999). In addition, the collaboration between the customary "dual system" and the Re-Enter initiatives tends to be weak, just because the former is clearly regulated and does not easily allow for deviating pathways (Zielke and Popp, 1997). Even if the Re-Enter initiative is successful in getting young people to "move on" it often turns out to be difficult for them to enter a "normal" apprenticeship.

The *structures* should be more open for pathways that deviate from what is considered to be "normal" as is, to some degree, allowed for in less regulated structures. That is, access should be provided in a much more flexible manner, encompassing "outreach services" as described for some examples of good practice by the Belgian partners. This would lower the access threshold especially for the young people who are the most at risk of dropping out completely, that is young people who have already been lost by the tracking mechanism usual for the VET structure outlined here.

Altogether the Re-Enter "schemes", although designed in a rather innovative form, should become less schematic as far as the framework conditions are concerned. This would also contribute to avoiding the "revolving door effect" which is sometimes connected with the rather schematic aspects which fit in with an overall strongly regulated structure.

More "after-care", a feature included in the model of route counselling, would contribute to better opportunities for indeed moving on in an increasingly clearly defined direction and pursuing a life project.

6.4 Strong school based structure

A close relationship between practice in the school workshops and theory in the classroom is supported by this structure which can be and sometimes is further developed in the sense of "action-oriented learning" organised in a combined workshop-classroom setting.

"Integrative" models can prove to be successful where the low achieving students are included in the whole learning group even if they may not participate fully in the most demanding tasks. This is certainly an excellent way of combating exclusion and preventing stigmatisation of the target group. Because in school based structures a hierarchy of occupations to which the respective VET is related does, of course, exist opportunities can usually be established also for low achieving students. In particular, the access thresholds are low as long as the young people, depending on their circumstances of living, remain within the scope of the tracking mechanism employed.

In addition, social and ethical education can be fostered if adjusted to the often problematic background of these young people. This has to avoid too much disciplining to minimise drop out.

On the other hand, a second threshold for entering the adults' labour market after leaving the school-based VET may constitute a severe problem especially for those at risk. Because enterprise-based training plays only a minor part in this structure the employers may be cautious as far as the employability of these youngsters is concerned, as the ability to deal successfully with the day-to-day challenges a "real" work-site may be in question (Lasonen, 1999).

Because the strong school based structure is usually, at the same time, rather strictly regulated it appears to be difficult to adjust the VET measures to respond quickly to the changing conditions in the labour market. The whole process of school-to-work transition often appears to be problematic for the target group. This seems to be one reason why drop out becomes a problem under unfavourable conditions of the labour market, and has sometimes led to establishing special Re-Enter initiatives as focused on in this book.

The obvious means for reducing these problems appears to be a stronger networking with enterprises which indeed has been introduced in some countries where the strong school-based structure is prevalent. This is equally important for Re-Enter initiatives proper which have been introduced. The latter are designed to be more open as compared to the conventional structure. In addition, these initiatives try to lay more stress on the self-reliance of the young people who are at risk. This should enable them to cope more effectively with the sometimes harsh conditions to be found in enterprises. Considering what has been said in section 2, the networking should also include the whole range of local initiatives dealing with young people's interests, like sports clubs, cultural centres etc. In this way a learning community centred on practice in the broader meaning can be and often is already established which includes a collaboration of Re-Enter initiatives, customary VET, youth work and social work (Lasonen and Kämäräinen, 1998).

While action-oriented learning suggests itself in the school-based structure "situated learning" in the sense employed in LCPs is more difficult to achieve. Re-Enter initiatives proper may give incentives to strengthen situated learning especially for low achieving young people, maybe for other components of the school-based structure, too. This would also in this case support the young people in "moving on", during their learning and after they have left the respective schemes for re-integration.

7. CONCLUSION

The reconnection of young people at risk of social exclusion has been shown to be a task of highest priority. In particular, the usual focus on re-integration into VET and into continuous gainful employment has been questioned in section 2. Beyond that, the preoccupation with the most modern forms of work turns out to be of little relevance for disadvantaged youths (Heidegger and Rauner, 1994), as outlined in section 3.

Because the cultural traditions and the institutional settings of the VET systems in the different European countries vary very much it proves to be, as has been mentioned, rather difficult to devise overall recommendations with respect to the implementation of specific Re-Enter initiatives in different countries. A method of analysing the possibilities has been demonstrated in sections 4 and 5 of this chapter. In section 6 important aspects, based on analytically distinguished model structures, have been presented in a systematically designed scheme.

The examples of good practice analysed by the partners point to quite a lot of common features. This diagnosis is asserted by the studies carried through by the partners with respect to particular features of Re-Enter initiatives which are published in this volume. As a conclusion, Chapter 9 lists the most important features of good practice which are applicable to at least most of the various educational systems have been listed under the heading of "Recommendations for the promotion of situated learning in Re-Enter programmes". In this way, the summary and the suggestions for establishing framework conditions for good practice, outlined in this chapter, should be viewed as mutually complementary.

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BEATRIX NIEMEYER AND KAREN EVANS

SUMMARISING CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PRACTICE

1. INTRODUCTION

The focus of this book has been on persons experiencing problems with the transitions between school, vocational education and training, and employment. To be excluded from training and education limits the individual's possibilities to engage and participate in social life. In addition the future labour market is supposed to have a growing demand for a skilled work force. The phenomenon of young persons withdrawing from the educational and training system is socially and economically damaging. While excluding mechanisms are caused by the shortcomings of labour markets and/or educational systems, pedagogical answers are sought, to provide support and assistance on the individual level. Special programmes aim to promote the trainability and the employability of the young, to re-motivate them for training and education and to qualify them for the labour market. These programmes are designed as a bridge between school and labour market. The first aim is challenged by the question in how far it prepares young persons for further learning, for training and the conditions of the labour market and a working life - if it opens up or rather narrows minds and expectations; the latter will have to be challenged on how flexible it is in its responses to learners (not only to employers) needs, to which extent it is able to carry a social responsibility for a future generation. From this perspectives Re-Enter programmes have a remedial function for the shortcomings of the established educational institutions and a curative function with regard to youth unemployment figures.

The aim of the educational concept of these programmes is oriented towards the regular VET structures in a country. Programmes therefore do have an inner link with the respective national VET systems, for example there are very few programmes in Greece, where many small enterprises offer job opportunities without training, thereby integrating young people during a stage of career orientation rather than excluding them. In Germany the dual apprenticeship system is strongly dependent on the general development of the labour market. General unemployment affects young persons applying for an apprenticeship in the first place. In Finland an established comprehensive school system makes it difficult for young people to find alternatives to classroom learning. Where work based training is a central element of
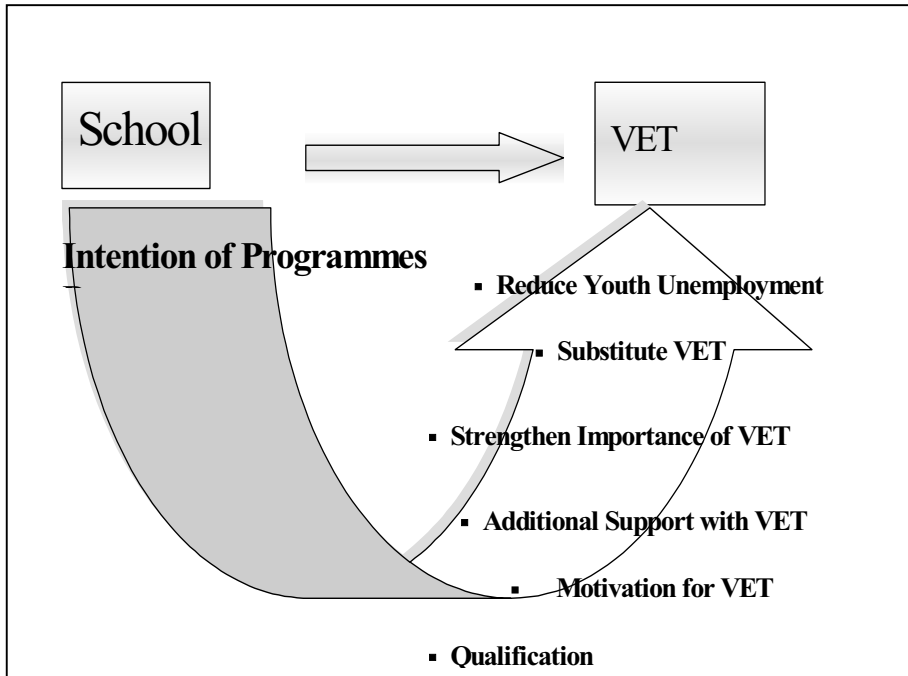
the VET system programmes offer support for those young who need additional help, be it for personal or social reasons. They provide a substitute for the training places lacking on the labour market, offer alternative routes and help to stay. Where VET is strongly school related (e. g. Finland, Belgium) another intention of programmes is to promote the work based route as a valuable alternative, bearing a high potential for learning and social integration. In countries where it is popular to enter the labour market directly, the idea of training and learning as a possible way to escape the trap of poverty and low skilled, low paid jobs is of higher importance.

2. THE TARGET GROUP OF RE-ENTER PROGRAMMES

Re-Enter programmes have to give a worthwhile answer to those young persons who have developed a resistance to schooling and training and do not feel their needs and concerns are addressed by the established institutions of vocational education and training. The problems of teenage mothers, street boys and immigrants in finding a place in vocational education and training within risky European labour markets are evident. Furthermore trends of local labour markets, demographics as well as social and cultural conditions often exert negative influence. For example, where there is a strong demand for unskilled work the importance of VET is reduced – young people

can enter the labour market without special training. In addition young persons who are going through this stage of transition are living through a biographical stage of change and orientation. They may have little real work experience, only learning experiences, but usually have the strong desire to become a legitimate participant in adult relationships, that are best acknowledged in the working world. The lack of motivation is the most common feature of young persons resistant to training and learning. To get them engaged, emotionally, socially, intellectually, is a major challenge. This involves consideration of individual factors, the institutional and environmental milieux and the socio-economic factors which influence life chances and the prospects for success of interventions.

3. GOOD PRACTICE IN RE-ENTER PROGRAMMES

In the evaluation of Re-Enter schemes, the effectiveness of job placement is often regarded to be the most important criterion for good quality. A recent CEDEFOP survey (CEDEFOP, 1998) stated that there is a lack of criteria to evaluate the quality of any Re-Enter programme other than by the money it costs. For several reasons, this should not be the sole consideration. More often than not, funding, politics and working conditions contradict good practice. Furthermore there are other preconditions influencing the success of job placements which cannot be influenced by the means of vocational education and training and the design of Re-Enter schemes:

- structure of the local or regional labour market, availability of jobs and/or training places
- social, cultural and economic capital of the young persons
- awareness and provision for disabilities in the workplace.

We argue that an important criterion for the quality of a programme is the extent to which it takes an holistic view on learners. Added to the holistic view on learners should be a holistic view on the qualification process and the way it is linked to the relevant social spheres. With regard to the educational approaches of Re-Enter programmes, the focus of this study, we have established a list of criteria.

To meet individual needs in troubled processes of transition Re-Enter initiatives have to:
- identify how young people perceive their own situation including values and beliefs.
- identify the learning barriers, incentives and needs.
- take account of material and social conditions which influence learning, participation and achievement.
- be responsive to learners changing needs, aspirations and expectations
- work with learners on "personal projects" / development plans.
- Provide a stimulating and supportive learning environment

To provide a stable institutional framework which fits the established career steps Re-Enter initiatives have to:

- develop an educational and training programme which the young people would perceive as more *relevant* to their needs than the conventional school curriculum.
- help the learners to further develop or reinforce their *basic skills*
- help them to *learn how to learn.*
- develop and reinforce the *personal qualities and attitudes* that will improve their chances of going on in VET
- enable learners to develop the *personal and social skills* necessary to participate successfully in everyday situations in adult life.
- provide *training places and apprenticeship.*
- provide the students with *guidance and counselling* in order to provide personal support, advocacy and to help them find appropriate training courses or employment.

To prepare for the changing demands of a future labour market Re-Enter initiatives have to:

- Ease the transition from school to working life and socialise young people into the world of work.
- Break down gender-stereotyping
- Respond to the needs and aspirations of the local community
- Prepare the students to adapt to likely changes in local structures of employment and labour markets
- Respond to particular training requirements of employers
- Ask for commitments of employers and employers' federations with regard to
- definition of educational needs
- engagement in curriculum design and complementary training
- Assessment

Examples of good practice in each country show the following commonalities. They concentrate on the development of the whole person, look at learners as an individual personality and help to develop individual plans of support. They understand the learning of the young persons as a process, moving them on, sometimes in small steps. They value the development of social and biographical skills as much as specific vocational and practical skills. And they highlight the importance of work related learning by offering meaningful occupation and a stimulating learning/working environment.

4. PERSPECTIVES ON LEARNING IN RE-ENTER PROGRAMMES

Learning practices in the field of vocational preparation differ from other settings of vocational education and training. The educational biographies of "disadvantaged" young people are usually shaped by social difficulties. In preparatory programmes,

an important socialising task exists quite apart from the task of leading the young person towards a purely vocational qualification. Here not only vocational skills shall be imparted, the promotion of social competence and personality/identity building activities are of just as great importance. While conventional vocational education and training particularly aims at the achievement of occupation-specific and technical qualifications, Re-Enter programmes go above and beyond technical qualifications, to offer as broad a vocational orientation as possible, and particularly in the sense of a holistic education, to enable young people to successfully take up, continue with and complete a vocational training. As important as instruction and guidance is the chance to grow in a learning community that is centred on practice and to support the young persons on their way to full participation. In theory as in practice, learning and socialising are hard to separate.

Theories of vocational education and training are based on the idea of a combination of learning and training at school and at the workplace, which is not true for many participants in Re-Enter programmes – either because they have not got a regular training place in a company or because they systematically withdraw from schooling.

Traditionally Re-Enter programmes are structured and organised in close relation to the dominant VET system, with the vocational and school certificates playing a crucial, if not problematic role. The German chapter, which relates to the normative concept of the standard occupational apprenticeship, highlights the following major differences:

1. Re-enter programmes address another target group, which differs from "normal" apprentices in terms of socialisation, knowledge and career orientation
2. Re-Enter curricula are different. Learning in Re-Enter programmes aims at the preparation for an "normal" apprenticeship, it is not a substitute for it. Basic skills and personal development (Aufarbeitung sozialisatorischer Defizite) and career orientation are the aims of learning, which are related to social rather than to vocational skills, including the ability to manage ones own biography (biographische Lebensbewältigung).
3. Re-Enter programmes offer different learning contexts. They face the challenge of balancing between an authentic and meaningful work context and providing the time and space necessary for learning and reflecting.
4. Re-Enter programmes face the challenge to allow for participation and social engagement of slow learners and low achievers.

In other countries apprenticeship is either not the normal experience or expectation, or has been eroded over time. In England, for example, the re-enter level would be at the level of entry to the foundation level of the modern apprenticeship for many young people, with the prospect of progressing to an advanced modern apprenticeship that would equate more closely to the German notion of a 'normal apprenticeship'. Yet there are very similar challenges, as the basic Foundation Modern Apprenticeship (youth training re-branded) often has to meet many of the above learning challenges with a heavy reliance on voluntary input from employers who are, in the main, much more attuned to the vocational

skills development rather the wider social support which they do not regard as their responsibility.

5. POTENTIAL OF SITUATED LEARNING IN RE-ENTER PROGRAMMES

We have shown that situated theories of learning can build on an approach to thinking about and theorising learning which has generated much interest in recent times in EU debates about VET. This approach is important because it tries to understand more about the learning process, which takes place informally in naturally occurring environments outside the structures of formal institutions, particularly the workplace. Previous research has concentrated mainly on "normal" vocational education and training or further education and has been responsive to the (expected) challenges of the labour market. Situated learning theories so far have been developed with respect to learning situations that are not typically to be encountered by the target groups of Re-Enter schemes. Therefore it was one aim of the research that led to this publication to test and explore the idea of situated learning in situations where learning is a troubled process, both for young persons and for the society. Our goal has been thereby to contribute to development of an appropriate educational approach in theory as well as in practice.

Based on the experience of good practice in the participating countries and grounded on social theories of learning this book has developed an expanded concept of *situated learning in LCPs, Learning Communities centred on Practice*, for this special field of education. This aims to integrate engagement and motivation as preconditions for learning and provides a holistic approach towards the learners' personality, dispositions and skills development. It is broad enough to embrace the various approaches of European VET practices. It is based on the importance of work experience and practical action for the enhancement of processes of learning and understanding, which are common to theories of vocational education and training, but shifts the focus from the individual to the social components of learning. Inspired by cognitive-anthropological theories it is argued that learning is not an individual act but learning processes are emerging and being constructed from a social context in which they are situated. Learning therefore is not a question of knowledge transfer but rather a question of allowing young persons to participate in social situations and accepting them as members with the potential of growing competence. From situated theories of learning we thus take the outstanding importance of the learning community, the LCP as the social framework for learning.

This concept of situated learning in LCPs is:

- practical, because it is based on the experience of good practice
- specific, because it is developed in view of the pedagogical challenges of the field of Re-Enter programmes

- action oriented, because it is based on the relevance of practical action for work related learning
- constructivist, because it understands learning as the process of construction of meaning embedded in the social context of a community of practice
- broad, because it aims to integrate the diversity experienced in the participating European countries.

Situated learning is

⇨ A specific *approach* to learning, viewing learning as a *social process* of interaction situated in a *community of social practice*

⇨ A *set of methods* situating learning in an *meaningful context*

⇨ A *process* aiming for *full participation* of the learner.

From the previous chapters the most important features of this concept of situated learning have become evident.

Most of the participants in Re-Enter programmes have negative experiences with learning at school. The reasons are multiple: poor language skills, a lack of motivation coming either from too much or too little challenge. For participants of Re-Enter programmes it has been found of special importance to link learning to a meaningful context. The most common way to achieve this has been done by relating the learning context to a practical work task which has some purpose and which the participants regard as worth doing. To avoid the association of learning with classroom teaching, reading and writing and the production of papers, this can be crucial to re-build the motivation for learning and training.

The supportive framework and concept of the Re-Enter initiatives acknowledges that knowledge and learning is situated and partly a product of the activity, context and culture in which it is used. This framework then recognises that learning takes place firstly in a meaningful, relevant and authentic context, and secondly through active participation. The framework recognises that meaning can only be established by (and not for) the learner, and it creates an environment where individuals or learners can explore, analyse, negotiate, reflect and increase knowledge.

6. RE-THINKING THE ROLE OF TEACHERS AND TRAINERS

To consider learning as social interaction in a community values the social components in learning, and questions both the idea of teacher and pupils and the importance of some forms of purposefully arranged instruction. Learning is not understood as an one-way-process but as a common activity. This is a special challenge for school based programmes, because teachers' role will be revised considerably. For the continuity of the integration process experience from various countries provides evidence of the valuable part a mentor or counsellor can play. There is also an interplay between the community within which learning takes place

and the individualised forms of support for young people are considered to be more flexible and appropriate to facilitate their way (back) into VET and into working life. Individual counselling, mentoring or coaching is of crucial importance for this process. Consequently the role of educators, teachers, trainers or youth workers is to be revised, moreover the set of educational methods changes.

To understand knowledge as socially constructed makes it clear that an important part of learning to teach consists in the enculturation into the teacher and trainers community, i. e. learning to think, talk and act according to the social context in which they are involved. Thus, as the Portuguese contribution highlights, it is important for the teachers, trainers, researches and other actors involved in the education process to identify key characteristics of this special field, based in research and direct experiences.

7. FORMAL AND INFORMAL CONTEXTS

Theories of learning have been developed predominantly with the perspective on established learning settings. The concept of situated learning questions the school as unique location of learning processes and stresses the importance of other learning surroundings. It values informal ways of learning and stresses the potential of unintentional learning settings. A reconceptualisation of learning in Re-Enter schemes in the sense of situated learning aims to overcome the distinction between formal and informal education.

Learning which takes place in the workplace often has been regarded as inferior to learning which takes place within educational institutions and is therefore regarded as less attractive. Here a rethinking has to take place between all the parties involved, with a prime focus on learning, with an openness that leads to the desire for *interaction* that crosses sectional, divisional, organisational and structural boundaries. There is both broad practical experience and a sound theoretical foundation to potentials of the work related learning.

Work based learning potentially plays a part in countering the social and economic exclusion of a growing minority of young people. The potential of work-based learning is multi-faceted:

- pedagogical: under certain conditions it can be the most effective way of integrating practical and theoretical learning
- curricular: work-based learning allows the curriculum to keep up with changing workplace practices, and it provides a bridge between the cultures of the school and the 'world of work'
- motivational: it may motivate young people to participate and learn, particularly those who are bored or alienated by full-time education
- social and economic integration: it provides adult roles for young people, particularly for those who are most at risk of dropping out of the system altogether; it may also smooth the transition into the labour market

- diversity: contributes to the diversity and flexibility of opportunities required in a modern educational system

8. REALISING LEARNING COMMUNITIES CENTRED ON PRACTICE

Re-Enter programmes are highly challenged by integrating a diversity of learning potentials, learning groups are very heterogeneous, socially and intellectually. This ongoing tendency has been answered by flexible individual support plans and tailor made learning or training programmes. Approaches concentrate on the young persons competences and stress learning as a process. Still, the concept of situated learning, as it has been developed by the contributors to this volume with special consideration for Re-Enter programmes, highlights the social situatedness and the importance of the social framework of a Learning Community centred on Practice for a successful holistic learning process of all partners concerned.

> The LCP is a wide and broadly encompassing unit which is formed through the people who are involved in the initiatives and who pursue shared practice and performance within them. Everyone who is participating is included in one way or the other in these initiatives, e. g. the learner, the project worker, the careers service, the social worker, parents, the project co-ordinator, etc.
> The LCP is not a rigid, established framework or organisational unit, it is not an institution. Communities are formed by people who know each other and who are in relation with each other. The shared goals and practices bring a community together. With regard to the chosen examples, communities of learners and teachers create contexts for learning centred on practice and furthermore make use of them in terms of a social infrastructure that fosters learning, or supports the learning process.

It has been argued, that situated learning does not allow for the individual to grow beyond the borders of the respective community of practice or take a critical position towards it. Experience with the apprenticeship model in vocational education also adds to this critique. The right to full access to any community can be reduced by hierarchy and the balance of power within this group. Expert participation would then also mean taking the responsibility for the collective growth of the community and a limited learning capacity should not limit the level of participation. Concepts of situated learning have to include the question about the critical dimension of participation and the direction of a learning process. The LCP concept allows for this, since the learning is both within the community but also recognises that the participants have lives outside and beyond the community, with individually distinct destinations and individualised support. For LCPs, unlike the previous conceptualisations of communities of practice, the individual trajectory is of great importance, and provides part of the reason and rationale for participation in this heterogeneous community. Participation includes the right to criticise and the ability to learn how to criticise and thereby influence and shape the values and strategies of the community as well as to clarify individual values and future goals.

In taking an holistic view the concepts of situated learning allow for an extended view on competences and competence development. Situated learning is not about specialised training of single skills, but about experience and competence in participation. This includes the process of acquiring the cultural attributes of participation: values and beliefs, common stories and problem solving strategies of a community of practice. It thereby offers an enhanced view of competences, integrating social, personal and vocational skills.

9. SELECTION MECHANISMS

When analysing situated learning in Re-Enter programmes selection mechanisms have to be examined in two respects:

1. how are programmes selected, respectively how are participants selected?. This gives evidence to the importance of outreach and access of programmes. Career guidance and orientation are of special importance taking into account that the transition from school to VET and working life takes place for young people at the critical ages of orientation in general. Situated learning sees young persons as active subjects in the process of programme selection, who should be given the necessary overview and the possibility to taste multiple occupational practice. The actors in the field of career guidance can be considered again as a community of practice, working together towards the aim of offering best chances to the young. In practice this might include working with young people to adjust expectations to various realities.
2. During a programme explicit and implicit selection mechanisms continue to determine on learners' success. On the one hand the social pedagogical approach, which aims to mediate biographical competence suffers from insufficient recognition. Apart from promoting the general ability to work, how is achievement to be recognised? How is progress to be valued, acknowledged, assessed and certified? Certificates (of success) can be an important motivating factor for learners. On the other hand, especially in strongly structured VET systems, examinations have a strong selective function, thereby severely hampering slow learners progress. Such systems of certification usually neglect informal learning and gradual progress and are not appropriate to situated learning concepts. 'Distance travelled' indicators, which review progress against personal 'milestones' and recognise soft outcomes such as enhanced confidence are under development in a range of European programmes

Further investigation into methods of evaluation, assessment and certification can only be mentioned as a desideratum here.

The concept of an LCP also provides a useful model for considering how the different partners who come together in creating the work based learning experience might complement each other.

*Helping the hardcore of disengaged youngsters to re-enter society is hence a **shared objective**. One authority or organisation cannot achieve it alone. The education system, for instance, cannot possibly manage the task by itself, because the youngster's problems extend beyond the situation at school.*

*At **local level**, it is important that relevant partners should adopt **structural co-operative links**. Relevant partners are authorities that offer part-time theoretical tuition, organisations that offer meaningful on-the-job training, organisations that are closely involved with youngsters in the target group, certain research centres, etc…. There is no limit in partnership, as long as the different partners are useful to the target group.*

*Furthermore, the co-operation should be formalised in **a protocol** in order to avoid problems of competence and responsibility. When the roles and responsibilities are not clearly laid down, the partners will come to blows. After all, enthusiasm and goodwill alone are not sufficient.*

Experience of partnership links formed to tackle the hard core of unemployment (Struyven, 1995) has taught us a few lessons that are also relevant for building partnership links dealing with our target group. Firstly, experience shows that simple networks have a greater chance of success. Organisations often have to get used to one another and mutual trust must grow. Secondly, those initiatives conceived on the 'shop floor' have the best chances of success. Knowledge and skill at implementation level lead to practical initiatives and provide a better foundation for co-operation than when imposed from above. Thirdly, that everything does not have to be achieved at once. It is better to achieve something small now that can be improved on later, than to stifle well-meaning intentions with excessive projects.

<div align="right">Belgian report, p. 24, 25</div>

10. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE PROMOTION OF SITUATED LEARNING IN RE-ENTER PROGRAMMES

There is no single concept of situated learning to be implemented in all European countries. But keeping in mind the three levels of situatedness of Re-Enter programmes – practical, social and cultural framework conditions – challenges can be described, and recommendations can be given towards an improvement of programmes and interventions. In a general perspective the essentials, which good Re-Enter programmes should consider, can be summed up according to the different levels of situatedness, as set out in the following section.

On the individual level good Re-Enter practice should:
➢ offer guidance
➢ help with career orientation
➢ provide low threshold access to programmes
➢ allow young persons to participate in the selection of programmes
➢ recognise prior learning
➢ accompany and motivate young person to (re-) enter VET
➢ allow time and space for orientation
➢ allow for flexible routes through programmes

On the practical level good Re-Enter practice should:
➢ allow for broad career orientation by a wide range of authentic tasks for learners
➢ offer a meaningful practice as an alternative to school based learning
➢ care for stable, long term reliable structures
➢ value unintentional learning
➢ certify learning progress, even in small steps
➢ organise the physical and cultural thresholds to learning and training as low as possible
➢ offer depth by a dualistic conception of theory and practice and promote inter-action in teaching and learning process
➢ provide stimulating learning environments

On the social level good Re-Enter practice should:
➢ promote a commitment to situated approaches
➢ help teachers, trainers and youth workers to learn about the young persons reality
➢ encourage partners /organisations, practitioners in Re-Enter schemes to identify their potentials as partners in a community of practice
➢ train professionals according to the principles of situated learning
➢ co-ordinate the institutions concerned with school to VET transition
➢ adjust counselling and support with career orientation
➢ strengthen the communication among youth, school, families, local institutions and communitarian leaders;
➢ negotiate with local and communitarian organisations in order to implement partnerships and networks
➢ create networks among communitarian organisations, work institutions, employment agencies in order to know and provide working learning opportunities
➢ create interdisciplinary teamwork that involves teacher, trainers, counselling, families, local institutions, employment agencies, mediators etc.

On the cultural level good Re-Enter policy should:
➢ develop collaboration across sectoral borders
➢ narrow the gap between vocational and higher/academic education
➢ be aware of the fact, that special programmes create problem groups
➢ promote general conditions for successful learning without establishing problem groups
➢ widen the concept of a group not only of temporary practice, but also consider the community of practice as spatial, cultural and generational sharing
➢ co-ordinate school, Re-Enter and VET
➢ care for access and equal opportunities
➢ care for coherence in programmes
➢ care for co-ordination of programmes

➤ remove obstacles in existing regulations and laws in order to recognise the competencies acquired like a factor of professional qualification.
➤ ensure sufficient funding

Theory and further research on situated learning in Re-Enter programmes should:
➤ map out the number and distinctive aspects of youngsters in the target group; possibly through a meticulous registration system and by research into the profile of the target group.
➤ develop assessment methods for processes of situated learning
➤ focus deeper on the social dimensions of learning in the community of practice with special regard to power relations and the establishment of hierarchy structures
➤ underpin the relation of vocational, social and biographical competence development
➤ investigate in the role of personal relationships within the community of practice
➤ elaborate the relation between novice, expert and institution
➤ explore the instruments and methods how meaning and competence are negotiated in the community of practice
➤ find out whether situated learning is suitable for all types of knowledge acquisition. Are there complex correlations in practice which ask for a certain basic knowledge which has to be learned in a different context?
➤ Collect qualitative data, transcription, dissemination and publication.
➤ explore the extent to which VET systems can seek to be inclusive or will always exclude some people.
➤ value and explore deeper unintentional learning.

11. BROADER CONSIDERATIONS

While we have focused in this book on the dimensions of the Re-enter problem that it is within the reach of VET to change or at least influence, our policy recommendations have go beyond this to take into account different possible socio-economic developments because these also directly influence the way Re-Enter initiatives should be carried through. Their connection with different possibilities for Re-Enter schemes in various cultural settings and the respective VET systems have been outlined. One important factor determining the general socio-cultural conditions for Re-Enter initiatives is the prospect of the economy. But this should not be the only consideration. As Chapter 8 has argued, a consideration of what makes life valuable and sensible – individually as well as socially – plays an equally important part.

In a "crisis of labour/work society", new solutions for the work/life balance have to be found. . It means that one has to look out for new models of "maintaining" a society where the supply of the labour force exceeds the demand, for the medium term future. In the "jobless growth" model the disadvantaged young people run the risk of entering a precarious occupational biography at the best, facing long term

unemployment in the worst case. In the model of the ,working poor' it is the low quality of jobs and quality of life consequent upon these that places young people at risk of disengagement. Given either possibility, we have argued that Re-Enter initiatives will have to provide space and time for learning *and living* processes which are not *solely* oriented towards re-integration into VET and / or the labour market (Deutsches Jugendinstitut, 2000). This possibility has also been envisaged by employing the idea of "learning communities centred on practice" as re-defined by the project partnership.

Finally, we have shown that educational systems everywhere are challenged by the question of how far they prepare young persons for further learning, for training, the conditions of the labour market and a working life. VET systems, no matter how they might be structured and organised, have also to be questioned. As well as asking how adequately young people are prepared for VET, we can ask how adequately VET systems are prepared for the changing needs of young people. How flexible are they in responding to learners' (not only to employers') needs, and how far do they reflect shared social responsibility for a future generation?

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